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A TREATISE OF INFALLIBILITY.

A

TREATISE

BRITISH MUSEUM

INFALLIBILITY.

A TREATISE OF INFALLIBILITY,

SHEWING

That the *Church* of *Rome*'s Claim to that high Privilege is without Foundation in SCRIPTURE, ANTIQUITY, or REASON.

IN ANSWER TO

A Paper on that Subject ſent by a Popiſh Miſſionary.

With ſome Animadverſions on a Book, entituled, *The ſhorteſt Way to end Diſputes about Religion*, and upon that Author's Way of reaſoning.

By a PRESBYTER of the Suffering Church of *Scotland*.

Behold therefore the Goodneſs, and Severity of God: On them which fell, Severity, but towards thee, Goodneſs, if thou continue in his Goodneſs; otherwiſe thou alſo ſhalt be cut off.
St. *Paul*'s Epiſtle to the Chriſtians at *Rome*, Chap. xi. v. 22.

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That the Church of Rome's Claim to that high Privilege is without Foundation in SCRIPTURE, ANTIQUITY, or REASON.

IN ANSWER TO

A Paper on that Subject, by a Popish Missionary.

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THE PREFACE.

IT will be expected that I ſhould give ſome Account of the Reaſons which determined me to write, and publiſh the following Eſſay; and perhaps I ought to make ſome Apology for writing at all, as well as for the Choice of this Subject, rather than any other.-----I take for granted, that every Man who is born into the World, comes under an Obligation to do all the Good he can while he lives in it.

While I was at Liberty to labour in my *proper Office*, I endeavoured to anſwer the Ends of that Office, with all the Induſtry and Skill I was capable of, by promoting Truth and Virtue, *i. e.* the true Intereſts of Religion and Society, amongſt thoſe to whom I had a paſtoral Relation; and when any of them were attacked by Seducers of whatever Kind, I had Opportunities better than I now enjoy, to obſerve the Danger, and repel the Aſſault: Not that I dare ſay, I have diſcharged my Duty, in a Way ſuited to the Importance of that ſacred Truſt, or the Obligations I was under: But while I am ſenſible of my own many Failures, and beg Forgiveneſs of God, and of that dear Flock of his, 'which he has purchaſed 'with his own Blood [a],' I may be indulged the Satisfaction of thinking, I had uſed my utmoſt Care and Diligence, to do what I could, though not what I ought.

For ſome Years paſt, this Liberty has been denied, and the Exerciſe of this Office made penal, not to me only, (for that had been of ſmall Conſequence) but to many others, (Labourers in the ſame Field) more worthy, and more uſeful than I was.

This ſevere Stroke to us, and our People, as we all feel, ſo (I hope) we all conſider it as we ought, that is,

[a] Acts, xx. 28,

as an additional Puniſhment for our Sins, and Unfruitfulneſs under the many Bleſſings and Advantages our Church once enjoyed; and far from entertaining Reſentment againſt the Authors, or Inſtruments of this Hardſhip, which (after the Example of the firſt Martyr) 'we 'pray, may not be laid to their Charge [b]:' We humble our ſelves under the mighty Hand of God, ſaying 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, and juſt are thy Judg-'ments! this is what our Sins have deſerved, this is 'what our Abuſe of former Mercies has provoked thee to.'

Reduced to a State of Inactivity, I began to think how I might be uſeful in ſome other Way, not yet forbidden us, and I was forced upon this one. The Peacefulneſs of my Temper did not point to Controverſy: For I am convinced our Time and Zeal are beſt employed in becoming good and holy our ſelves, and making others ſuch; and this (by the Aid of divine Grace) may be attained, without our being very learned or dexterous in the Management of a Debate: But ſeveral Circumſtances concurred to determine me to a Subject, to which my Inclination would not have led me.

Soon after the great Revolution which happened in *Britain*, towards the End of the laſt Century, one fifth Part of the Biſhops of *England*, with ſome hundreds of their Clergy, and all the Biſhops of *Scotland*, with moſt of theirs, were deprived, on Account of their Non-compliance with the prevailing Meaſures of that Time; and even *Epiſcopacy* itſelf was aboliſhed here.

Theſe deprived Churchmen (who are allowed to have had no ſmall Share of Learning and Probity) had entertained ſome Opinions (and no doubt thought them harmleſs ones) that Dominion is not founded in Grace.——That Miſtakes in Religion do not forfeit one's natural Right.——That as Chriſtianity recommends Suffering rather than Reſiſtance, the ſame Submiſſion and Fidelity was due by them to a popiſh Prince, which the firſt and beſt

[b] Acts, vii. 60.

beſt Chriſtians had paid to Heathen Perſecutors.——And conſequently, That the Allegiance which they owed, and had ſworn to King *James* and his Heirs, could not be transferred to any other.

Such were the Sentiments of the pious Dr. *Thomas Kenn*, the deprived Biſhop of *Bath* and *Wells*, as he tells us in a Dedication to his exiled Maſter, of a little Book (*The Royal Sufferer*) printed after his Deprivation.—— 'Your royal Father (ſays he) was a *Proteſtant*, and lived 'and died in, and for that Profeſſion, and I could heartily wiſh that your Majeſty was ſo too; for then we 'might quickly hope to ſee an End of our preſent Miſeries in a ſhort Time. But though ſo great a Bleſſing 'be denied us, yet ſhall my Loyalty and Duty approve 'itſelf the ſame, as if you were ſo; for I cannot conceive (whatever ſome may think) that your Majeſty's 'being of another Perſuaſion than my ſelf, can diſcharge 'me of my Allegiance to you: And I hope your Majeſty will not the leſs regard what I have here written, 'becauſe I profeſs my ſelf, as I always did, to be a Member, and an unworthy Son of the Church of *England*.' Though theſe proſcribed Prelates and their Clergy had made a vigorous (and moſt effectual) Oppoſition to Popery, in a Time of great Jealouſy and Trial, yet theſe memorable Services were then forgotten.

The Apoſtle ſays, 'That whoſoever keeps the whole 'Law, and offends in one Point, is guilty of all [c].' Such was the Caſe here, that whoſoever could not go all Lengths in Revolution Principles and Meaſures, was doomed a Malignant and a Papiſt; and accordingly an Opinion was induſtriouſly propagated (chiefly among thoſe who knew no better) that the obſtinate Adherence of theſe ſuffering Churchmen to the Rights of a baniſhed Prince, proceeded from ſome ſecret Bias to his Religion.

There could ſcarce have been deviſed any Suſpicion more groundleſs, or Surmiſe more injurious to them than this

[c] St. James, ii. 10.

this was; as appears from a Paragraph in the Paper juſt now mentioned.——'If your Majeſty (ſays Biſhop 'Kenn) would vouchſafe to bear with me a little, I could 'eaſily demonſtrate this (*i. e.* the Communion of the 'Church of *England*) to be the moſt ſafe Way. For if 'I am regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and made a Chriſti-'an by true Baptiſm, believing the Scriptures, can it 'with any Colour of Reaſon be ſuppoſed, that I ſhall 'ſuffer Damnation, for not equally believing Traditions? 'And if I make Conſcience to ſerve and worſhip God, 'can it be thought I ſhall periſh for not worſhipping I-'mages? If I pray to God, as our Bleſſed Saviour hath 'taught me, ſaying, *Our Father, &c.* who can think I 'ſhould incur the Sentence of Damnation, for not invo-'cating Saints and Angels? And if I receive the holy 'Communion of the Body and Blood of Chriſt, in both 'Kinds, according to Chriſt's Inſtitution, as even the '*Roman* Church confeſſeth, who can believe I ſhall be 'damned becauſe the Cup is taken away by a Council? 'Theſe Things I urge with all Humility, only to let your 'Majeſty ſee, what Reaſon I have to *believe the Prote-'ſtant Religion to be the moſt ſafe Way.*'

But this was not all, the ſame Malice which miſrepreſented theſe harmleſs Men, as leaning towards Popery, contrived and brought forth Complaints againſt them, as *Firebrands*, and *Enemies to their Country*. Several flying Papers and Pamphlets were publiſhed, particularly a very ſhrewd one, intituled 'A modeſt Inquiry into the 'Cauſes of the preſent Diſaſters;' wherein they were called (in way of Irony and Reproach) *the holy, Jacobite*, Lambeth *Club*, and publickly charged with having contrived and carried on (eſpecially in their Meetings at *Lambeth*) a Plot for the Ruin of *England;*——with having preſented, or cauſed to be preſented for that Purpoſe, a certain *Memorial to the* French *King;*——and with keeping a conſtant Correſpondence with his Miniſters, in order to a French *Invaſion, &c.*

Theſe

These Invectives were like to ſtrike ſo deep in their Conſequences, that the *diſſentient* Prelates found it neceſſary to vindicate themſelves from thoſe Calumnies, on Purpoſe to reſcue their injured Characters, and (if poſſible) to preſerve their Perſons from the Fury of the Mob, which (they had Reaſon to fear) theſe Hackney Writers, and falſe Accuſers intended to ſpirit up againſt them.

Accordingly a ſolemn Proteſtation of their Innocence was drawn up, and printed, intituled, 'A Vindication 'of the Archbiſhop, and ſeveral other Biſhops, from the 'Imputations and Calumnies caſt upon them by the Au-'thor of the Modeſt Enquiry, *&c.* [d].'

This Paper was ſigned by the Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, the Biſhops of *Norwich*, *Ely*, *Bath* and *Wells*, and *Peterborow*, (and in a Poſtſcript, taking burden for their Brother of *Glouceſter*, as being of the ſame Sentiments with them, though not then preſent to ſign) wherein they (in moſt ſolemn and awful Manner) as in the Preſence of God, proteſt and declare (*inter alia*) 'That 'neither they, nor any of them, ever held any *Corre-'ſpondence* directly or indirectly, with *Monſieur de Croiſſy*, 'or with any Miniſter or Agent of *France*.——That if 'any ſuch *Memorial* as the Libel mentions, was ever 'really preſented to the *French* King, they never knew 'any Thing of it, or any Thing relating to it.-----That 'they did utterly renounce both that, and all other In-'vitations ſuggeſted to be made by them, in order to 'any Invaſion of this Kingdom by the *French*.-----That 'they utterly denied and diſavowed all *Plots* charged up-'on them, as contrived or carried on in their Meetings 'at *Lambeth*, the Intent thereof being to adviſe, how 'in their preſent Difficulties they might beſt *keep Con-'ſciences void of Offence towards God and towards Man*. 'That they were ſo far from being the Authors or Abet-'tors of *England's* Miſeries, (whatever the Spirit of Lying

[d] Life of Mr. Kettlewell by R. Nelſon, p. 106. *&c.* printed for D. Brown, A. Churchill and J. Knapton &c. London, 1719.

'and Calumny might vent againſt them) that they ever 'did, and (to their dying Hour) ever would heartily and 'inceſſantly pray for the Peace, Proſperity and Glory 'of *England*, and would always by God's Grace, make 'it their daily Practice, *to ſtudy to be quiet*, to bear their 'Croſs patiently, and to ſeek the Good of their native 'Country.——And that whoever was the Author of the 'Libel, (which was to them unknown) they deſired (ac-'cording to the Command and Example of our bleſſed 'Lord) to return him Good for Evil; and though he 'barbarouſly endeavoured to raiſe in the whole *Engliſh* 'Nation ſuch a Fury, as might end in *De witting* them, '(a bloody Word, but too well underſtood) they recom-'mended him to the divine Mercy, humbly beſeeching 'God to forgive him, *&c. &c.*'

This Vindication had that good Effect, as to calm in ſome Meaſure that dreadful Storm which had (with a great deal of Artifice) been raiſed againſt the deprived Biſhops; nay, there were ſome zealous enough for the Revolution, but who had in them a greater Share of good Nature and Compaſſion than many others had, who were diſpoſed to allow, that theſe worthy Prelates, who were *diſobedient to the new Statute*, but had upon a former Occaſion made ſo glorious a Stand for the Religion and Laws of their Country, ſhould either be continued in their Places, under ſome certain Limitations, or ſhould at leaſt have ſome particular Mark of Favour and Diſtinction conferred upon them, whereby they might ſit eaſy and undiſturbed. For they were of Opinion, that no Danger could enſue to the Government, from tolerating thoſe pious Men, whoſe chief Aims were in the other World; becauſe they who choſe ſuffering for Conſcience, would not (probably) think of reſtoring their Fortunes by Violence; and that as the Narrowneſs of their Minds *hindred their Compliance*, the ſame ſelf denying Principles would prevent their giving any publick Diſturbance. But there were others, (and theſe the more numerous and powerful Party) ſo violently diſguſted at Non-compliance,

pliance, that they would hear of no Mitigation, or Relaxation whatſoever, in Favour of the deprived Prelates and Clergy.

However, this ſeaſonable Vindication diverted any Attack from the Mob at that Time, and reſcued them from the Suſpicion of plotting againſt the Quiet and Liberty of their Country; which was ſo far happy for them: But they were not ſo fortunate as to the other Article they were charged with.

After all that they had done, and ſaid, and preached, and written, in Oppoſition to the Errors of the *Roman* Church; after all the Declarations, and ſtrongeſt Evidence they could give, of their ſincere, ſteady Attachment to the Doctrine, Worſhip and Polity of the reformed Church of *England*, the Suſpicion of being *popiſhly affected* (firſt invented by Malice or Policy) was ſupported by Art and Induſtry, and ſtill runs, (amongſt the Unthinking) not only againſt theſe great and pious Men, but againſt all others of their Sentiments and Communion.

Next to a good and quiet Conſcience, a clear and unblemiſhed Reputation is amongſt the greateſt Bleſſings Men can enjoy upon Earth: To preſerve this is a Duty, and ought to be a Part of our Care; ſince we are enjoined to 'provide things honeſt, not only 'in the Sight of God, but of Men too [e];'——'to cut 'off Occaſion from them that ſeek Occaſion againſt 'us [f];'——and 'not to let our Good be evil ſpoken 'of [g].'

I thought therefore, that to detect and confute ſome of the chief Errors, or rather, I may ſay, the fundamental Error of Popery, (being that which props and ſkreens all the reſt) had a direct Tendency to wipe off this vile Aſperſion, equally falſe and hurtful.

[e] Rom. xii. 17.
[f] 2 Cor. xi. 12.
[g] Rom. xiv. 16.

And this may ſuffice for the general Reaſon which determined me to this Subject.

Being thus engaged to write on ſome Article of the Controverſy between the Church of *Rome* and us, there was no Room left to heſitate what that Article ſhould be.

Their Doctrine of *Infallibility* is the *Trojan* Horſe of the *Roman* Church; it brings Conqueſt, Ruin, and Deſtruction, wherever it finds Admittance. It is the *jugulum cauſæ* between them and us: If they prove it true, all that they have built upon it muſt be true likewiſe: But if it is found falſe and groundleſs, all that they have raiſed upon that Foundation, muſt tumble down of Courſe. So that to attack this their ſtrong Hold, is like ſtorming a Citadel, or laying the Axe to the Root of the Tree. Whether I have done this with any Skill and Succeſs, I muſt leave the intelligent, impartial Reader to judge, and the Event to determine.

About ſeventy Years ago the *Roman* Miſſionaries came furniſhed with all the Arguments they could bring on the ſeveral Branches of the Controverſy betwixt them and us, which are not a few. The Divines of the Church of *England* that then were, being equal in Learning to any others in the World, and having the Advantage of Truth on their Side, baffled all the Attempts of their Adverſaries, turned their own Artillery againſt them, drove them out of the Field, and made them aſhamed of their Cauſe.

From that Time they have contented themſelves with Skirmiſhings and Surprizes, and avoided coming to cloſe Action; But, that they might make the beſt Retreat they could, they form themſelves every now and then into a Sort of hollow Square, from whence they throw Squibs and Hand-granads, maintaining a Kind of running Fight, in which they ſeldom uſe any other Weapon now, than the *Infallibility* of their Church, and (which is ſomewhat like the Smoke after a Diſcharge) the *Supremacy* of their Biſhop, and

that

that by divine Appointment too. Theſe two Articles of their Religion are as fanciful and groundleſs as any, but being more wrapt up than others are in the Clouds of Fallacy and Obſcurities of Tradition, are not ſo obvious to every ordinary Obſerver.

This brought to my Remembrance the very wiſe Inſtruction given by the King of *Syria* to the Officers of his Army 'to fight neither with ſmall nor great, but 'with the King of *Iſrael* only [h],'——that their fierceſt Attack, or ſtrongeſt Defence might be oppoſed to the greateſt Danger.

Upon this Plan of Operation, it was fit to begin at the Bottom, and attack them in their main Strength; and if I have ſucceeded in the Attempt, it will prove like *Aaron*'s Rod in *Egypt*, eating up 'all the Ser-'pents of the Magicians [i].'——I do not mean as to the Miracle, but as to the Effect.

And as in this Article they lay great Streſs upon Antiquity, Tradition, and Preſcription, I have been careful to wipe off this falſe Colouring, their artificial Paint, and to ſhew that all their thin Pretences are no better than the dry mouldy 'Bread of the *Gibeonites* [k], 'pretended indeed to have come from far, and to have 'been long kept, but (upon Trial) found to have been 'baked of late, and in the Neighbourhood.'

This was enough to have challenged a Preference to this Point of Diſpute, had I been left to my Choice, but that was not the Caſe, for Neceſſity was laid upon me to begin here.

Some Time ago, a Paper was put into my Hand, written *ex profeſſo* on this Subject of Infallibility, by a *Romiſh* Miſſionary: The Paper itſelf, which contains all the beſt Arguments they are able to bring forth, and the Dignity of the Perſon intended to be ſeduced into their

[h] 1 Kings, xxii. 31.
[i] Exod. vii.
[k] Joſh. 9.

their Communion, by this Means, ſhew plainly, the Miſſionary employed in that Service to have been one of the moſt capable and fit they had to employ in the Buſineſs of making Proſelytes.

Thus a Taſk, which might have come into better Hands, was laid upon me, and I was earneſtly called upon to give a diſtinct Anſwer to this Paper, (Paragraph by Paragraph) by diſcovering the Weakneſs and Fallacy of the ſeveral Arguments it contains for propping this *Dagon* of *Rome*.

Being thus fairly engaged, I thought it would not be from the Purpoſe to take ſome notice (as I went along) of a Book printed more than thirty Years ago, chiefly on the ſame Queſtion, and entituled, *The ſhorteſt Way to end Diſputes about Religion.* The Author (whoever he was) has been a Man of great Addreſs, but deſtitute of due Regard to Truth, Decency, and common Honeſty. And his Work is ſuch a Mixture of Wit and Falſhood, of Ridicule and Sophiſtry, as could not fail to puzzle and endanger (even while it entertains) the unlearned and unwary Reader. I have therefore taken the Liberty to animadvert a little upon it, as it came in my Way, which has ſwelled my Eſſay beyond the Size I intended.

Though I have ſometimes been provoked to treat the Author of this laſt named Book with leſs Decorum than ought to be amongſt Churchmen, or Scholars, (for which I beg the Reader's Pardon) I here declare that I have no Rancour, Spite, or Party Rage againſt Chriſtians of any Profeſſion or Denomination.

My great Aim in this Treatiſe has been to diſcover and point out the Side of the Queſtion on which Truth lies, to eſtabliſh the firm Belief and Profeſſion of it, and (though I may not be ſo happy as to ſtop the Mouths of Gainſayers) to fortify all Proteſtants againſt the Attacks of them who ly in wait to deceive.

But there are two Sorts of Perſons I have chiefly in

View

View to ſerve by the Publication of this Eſſay, and who I ſincerely wiſh may be profited by it.

I ſhould be glad if it were of any Uſe to the *Charity Schools* in the Highlands, and other remote Parts of *Scotland*. Perhaps the frequent Mention of Biſhops and the other Orders of Eccleſiaſticks, may give them Offence, which I would be ſorry for, though I could not avoid it, as I muſt ſpeak the Language of thoſe ancient Authors I was obliged to conſult.

I am not vain enough to imagine, that the Gentlemen under whoſe Direction theſe Schools are, *i. e.* the Miniſters of the preſent Eſtabliſhment, ſtand in need of ſuch poor Aſſiſtance as I can bring: I am acquainted with ſome of them, whom I eſteem as Men of Learning and good Addreſs; and yet I cannot help thinking that they deal at ſome Diſadvantage in this Argument, and have not an equal Chance with us in any Encounter with Papiſts. For the chief Artillery of the Church of *Rome*, being (in Pretence indeed, but not in Truth and Reality) brought from the Fathers of the Church in her early Ages, theſe Gentlemen, by renouncing the *ancient Government* of the Chriſtian Church, have in Effect declared War againſt a Number of excellent Men, Martyrs and Confeſſors, who ſubmitted to, and preſerved this Government, as uſeful and neceſſary, and have thereby loſt good Allies, a great auxiliary Strength in all Conflicts with *Rome*; and having thus deprived themſelves of one Half of their Defence, they are not ſo fit, as otherwiſe they would have been, to turn the Cannon upon the common Enemy, and fight them with their own Weapons. Their throwing up *Epiſcopacy*, is to them in the Day of Action, like laying aſide their Helmet, or any ſuch important Part of Armour. So that however brave they may be in the Field, they have leſs Chance to be ſafe and ſucceſsful than they might have had if compleatly armed.

But the Perſons I have chiefly in my View to ſerve by this Eſſay, (as they ſtand moſt in need of my

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Aſſiſtance) are ſuch of our Countrymen whoſe Buſineſs or Fate oblige them to live abroad in Popiſh Countries, expoſed to the frequent Aſſaults of Proſelyte-makers, remote from Advice, deſtitute of the Books which might be fit for their Defence, and their Danger perhaps increaſed by their Neceſſities, and the Straits ſome of them may be reduced to.

If this little Treatiſe, on the cardinal Point of the Controverſy, (being that upon which all the reſt depend) written in the moſt artleſs, plain, ſimple Manner, ſuited even to them of leaſt Education, and loweſt Capacity, and which may come into their Hands at a ſmall Expence, if it can be of Uſe to help out their Defence, and ſtabliſh them in the Truth, I ſhall think my Labour well beſtowed, and bleſs God whoſe Grace has enabled me to do ſo much Good.

'May Almighty God, the God of Mercy, of Truth, 'and Order, ſtrengthen ſuch as do ſtand, comfort and 'help the weak-hearted, raiſe up them that fall, and 'bring back into the Way of Truth all ſuch as have 'erred and are deceived.——May he put an End to all 'thoſe Diviſions and Animoſities which rend aſunder 'the ſeamleſs Coat of his dear Son, and reſtore thoſe 'peaceful Times to his Church, when there ſhall be 'no other Contention among Chriſtians but who ſhall 'love him moſt, and ſerve him beſt; when fervent, 'univerſal Charity ſhall be the common Soul to animate 'the whole Body of Believers, and when they ſhall 'all with one Mouth and one Mind, glorify God the 'Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, our bleſſed Redeem-'er and only Mediator. *Amen.*"

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A

TREATISE

OF

INFALLIBILITY, &c.

CHAP. I.

Containing ſome General Obſervations *on* Infallibility, *and a few of the many* Difficulties *with which that favourite, and (I may ſay) peculiar Doctrine of the* Romiſh *Church is attended.*

IMMUNITY from Error, is amongſt the higheſt Privileges which God can beſtow on any Man, or Society of Men; and therefore, whoever lays Claim to that Privilege, ſhould have his Pretenſions very well vouched.

As it is neceſſary in Architecture, to proportion the Depth and Breadth of the Foundation, to the Height and Weight of the Edifice to be raiſed upon it; ſo, it had been

fit for the Writers and Miſſionaries of the *Romiſh* Church, to have gone to the Bottom, by clearing the Ground of all the Rubbiſh, and Impediments, which ſtand in the Way of that lofty Structure they want to raiſe; that is, to have begun their Work, with obviating the Objections, and ſolving the Difficulties, which greatly incumber their Progreſs, and which, till they are moved out of the Way, muſt for ever mar their Pretenſions, and forbid our Aſſent to their high Claim.

The Writers for that Church have failed in this very material Article; and particularly, of the two I am now concerned with, one has entirely overlooked theſe Difficulties he ought to have removed, e're he had gone further, and the other has touched them but very ſlightly; with what Succeſs, and how much to the Satisfaction of his Readers, we ſhall ſee afterwards [a].

For this Reaſon, I thought it would not be foreign to the Purpoſe, if, before I proceed to a particular Examination of the Authorities upon which theſe Writers labour to eſtabliſh the Infallibility of their Church, I lay before the candid Reader, ſome of thoſe

[a] Shorteſt Way to end Diſputes about Religion, Part 2d, Page 295, &c.

those Difficulties which they have thought fit to slur over, with some general Remarks on their Way of Reasoning, and of the extraordinary Caution and Wariness with which their Argument is brought forth.

§ I. Let us at present suppose, (what will by and by appear not true in Fact) that the Church of *Rome* has the Infallibility she now contends for; yet it would be of no Use, and can be of no Service, unless they were agreed among themselves where it is lodged, whether in the Pope, or in the Council, or in both together, or in neither, but in the whole Body of the Church, collective, or distributive. This Point they have not yet settled; so that, in Cases of Difficulty, they have been as much at a Loss to find out this living infallible Judge of Controversies, as we, who do not lay Claim to him.

The ingenious Author of the Manuscript now before me, well foresaw he must be encountered with this Difficulty, and therefore he takes no Side of the Question, but intrencheth himself in fair Generals, lodging it in the Church at large; which being a Word of lax Signification, (as will appear afterwards) gives every Church on Earth, at least every Apostolical Church, an

an equal Pretenſion to it, with that of *Rome*, if they did but claim it with equal Confidence, and had the Fortune to be believed.

'Tis true, this Gentleman ſeems to give it in Favours of the repreſentative, or governing Part of the Church, the Paſtors; but whether in all the Paſtors, or only in the chief Paſtors, the Succeſſors of St. *Peter*, he is ſo loth to determine, that, to avoid the Hazard he lay open to, he takes the Liberty to contradict himſelf; for in one Place [b] he aſcribes it to the Apoſtles, and their Succeſſors, but in other Parts of his Paper [c] he labours hard to confine it to the Succeſſor of only one of theſe Apoſtles, the Biſhop of *Rome*, and thoſe in Communion with him.

Had he, with *Bellarmine*, *Cajetan*, and all the *Jeſuits*, *&c.* placed this Infallibility in the Pope, either in his Chair, or in the Conclave, or in the Pope any where, he needed only to have been ſent to thoſe of his own Church, for proper Correction, to ſeveral conſiderable Men of that Communion, and particularly to the very learned Dr. *Du Pin*, who has written accurately and unanſwerably againſt the Pope's Infalli-

bility

[b] Parag. 3d.

[c] Parag. 18th, where he treats of the Supremacy.

bility[d]; or to the Councils of *Piſa*, *Conſtance*, and *Baſil*, which depoſed Popes, declared their Fallibility, and ſubjected them to the Authority of a General Council; which, if the Pope was Chriſt's Vicar-general upon Earth, univerſal Biſhop, and ſupreme, infallible Judge of Controverſies, was downright Rebellion, in ſetting the Members above the Head.

Had he placed the Infallibility in a Council, he might have been directed to Councils of very different Complexions, ſome decreeing one Thing, and others the direct contrary, yet both calling themſelves œcumenical, anathematizing all that differed from them, and gravely aſſuring the World, that all this *ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt, and to them.* Tho', after all, it will be hard to conceive an Infallibility, which could determine both Sides of a Contradiction to be true.

Had he lodged it, in the Pope and Council agreeing together, it might be asked, where it is lodged when they diſagree? which has often been the Caſe[e]; Whether Pope *Liberius*, and the Council of *Sirmich*, were infallible, or ſo much as ſound in the Faith,

[d] *De antiqua eccleſiæ diſciplina, Diſſert. 5. p. 339. ad 377. Tom. 12. Concil. col. 682.*

[e] *Du Pin. Ibid. p. 347. --- & Eccleſ. hiſt.*

Faith, even when they did agree? I hope he would not ſay, that their Agreement in an Error, could convert it into Truth; or that, when *Liberius* ſigned their Confeſſions[f], *Arianiſm*, or *Demi-Arianiſm*, became the Catholick Doctrine.

Had he put it in the Church *diffuſive*, in the Body of the Paſtors throughout the World, or in all who profeſs Chriſt, this would have ſpoiled his whole Plot; for at this rate, the *Greek*, and other Oriental Churches, and the Reformed might claim Part of the Privilege; nay every ſingle Prieſt, and every ſingle Perſon, would put in for his Share; and thus his darling Infallibility would be reſolved into Individuals.

We ſee now, what Reaſon this Gentleman had to be ſo cautious and reſerved in this Matter: An Infallibility he would fain have, but he muſt not tell where. Indeed an Infallibility which cannot be found out, is (one would think) equal to none at all[g]; and that we may be as happy, and as certain, with a confeſſedly *infallible Rule*, the Word of God, which we have always at Hand, and may conſult when we pleaſe, as they with a ſuppoſed infallible Guide, while they do not know how to come at him,

[f] *A. D.* 357.

[g] *De non entibus, & non apparentibus, eadem eſt ratio.*

him, nor are agreed among themſelves where he is to be found.

The judicious Mr. *Leſlie*, in his *Caſe ſtated*, had obſerved this Variety and Repugnancy of Opinions among *Roman* Catholick Divines, about the Seat of their Infallibility, and had urged the Argument ariſing from thence, againſt their vain Pretence, with his uſual Diſtinctneſs, and Strength of Reaſon.

The chief Champion of the *Romiſh* Church that has appeared in this Century, I mean, the Author of *The ſhorteſt Way to end Diſputes about Religion*, (a Book ſaid to be printed at *Bruſſels* in 1716) is very angry with Mr *Leſlie* for this, treats him roughly, and by a Mixture of Wit, Ridicule, and Sophiſtry, labours hard to darken and perplex an Argument he ſaw he could not anſwer.

As he has ſpent about twenty-four Pages on this Article [h], and all in this Way, and as I write for Truth, not for Triumph, and reſolve to keep within Bounds as narrow as poſſible, it is not to be expected I ſhould purſue him thro' all the Windings of his Labyrinth: A few Examples will detect the Gentleman's Way of Reaſoning, and convince

[h] Part 2d. From P. 295, to 319.

vince every unbiaſſed Reader, that he had more Smartneſs than Honeſty.

He ſets out with a ſour Reproof to Mr. *Leſlie*, for objecting to *Roman* Catholicks Variety of Opinions, when there is as great, or greater Variety of Opinions among Proteſtants on very important Points. On this he ſpends full five Pages [i], and gives it ſo high a Seaſoning of Railery, as might miſlead an unwary Reader: But when the Force of his Argument is calmly conſidered, the Sum total of it is juſt this, "That "Proteſtants are in the ſame ill Condition, "without a living infallible Guide, that "*Roman* Catholicks are with him, there be-"ing Diverſity of Opinion among both, "on very material Points." This is all the Fruit of his Labour, the only Conſequence deducible from his Argument: And if from this it can be concluded that the *Romiſh* Church is infallible, let the Reader judge.

Next, he makes a faint Acknowledgment, that ſome among them have placed the Infallibility in the Pope. I muſt tranſcribe his own Words, they are ſo curious, and well choſen for his Purpoſe. "'Tis very true, "(ſays he) [k] that ſome Divines hold, that "the Pope, conſidered preciſely as Chriſt's "Vicar

[i] From P. 296.
[k] P. 301.

" Vicar upon Earth, and without being at " the Head of a general Council, is infal- " lible; but that any Catholick Divine pla- " ces the Infallibility in the *Pope alone*, " *that is, excluſively of a general Council, and* " *the diffuſive Body of the Church*, I utterly " deny, and challenge the Gentleman to " produce any one Divine of that Opini- " on."

This is diverting enough: The Pope is infallible without a Council, but not excluſively of a Council.——Really, whoever is diſpoſed to ſwallow Contradictions, and be fed with ſuch whip'd Cream, may believe that Infallibility when he pleaſes: But ſince he challenges that Gentleman (who cannot now anſwer for himſelf) to produce any *one Divine* of that Opinion, I beg leave to do it for him. I hope he will not deny that *Bellarmine* was one of his Catholick Divines. Now he, [1] from the Words of Chriſt to St. *Peter*, *Feed my Sheep*, makes this ſtrong Inference, " That the Pope is Teach- " er and Paſtor of the whole Church, there- " fore the whole Church is bound to hear " and follow him; and therefore, if he " ſhould err, the whole Church would err

 " too."

[1] *Pontifex eſt doctor & paſtor totius eccleſiæ, ergo tota eccleſia illum audire & ſequi tenetur; ergo, ſi ille erret, tota eccleſia errabit.* Bellarm. de Rom. Pontif.

" too." Is not this to place Infallibility in the Pope alone, and to ſtrip both Councils and the Body diffuſive of all Pretenſion to any Share of the Privilege?

Since one Inſtance was all he demanded, this one ſhall ſuffice, tho' it were eaſy to bring Numbers, but that it is not neceſſary; for if the Advocates for the Pope's Infallibility meant no more than this metaphyſical Author will allow they do, what Occaſion had the *Gallican* Church to condemn this Doctrine? Why would Dr. *Du Pin* take ſo much Pains to confute *Bellarmine*, *Cajetan*, *Duvallius*, *&c.* by proving from Scripture, from Antiquity, from the Decrees of Councils, from the Sentiment of the Schools, and of Divines, from the Acknowledgment of ſome more modeſt Popes, from Inſtances of others which did actually err, and from the contradictory Definitions of the *Roman* Pontiffs; from all theſe, I ſay, to demonſtrate, that the Pope is not infallible[m]? Sure if ſuch an Opinion had never been broached and maintained by any Divine of Figure and Following in that Church, a Man ſo learned as Mr. *Du Pin* would not have thought it worth while to have fought ſo long with the Air.

Nor

[m] *De antiq. eccleſ. diſciplina, p.* 339, *&c.*

Nor is our Author more lucky with reſpect to Councils; for [n] he gives the Lie to the Author of *The Caſe ſtated*, for affirming, "That ſome of their Divines lodge the "Infallibility in a general Council, as ſu"perior to the Pope, with Power to re"form, and even to depoſe him."——After he has (with his uſual Fineneſs and Ingenuity) wrought up this into a Shape, which he fancied might bear ſome Contradiction, he modeſtly concludes his Paragraph, "This "was never maintained by any Catholick "Divine."

I hope this Gentleman will allow Dr. *Du Pin* to have been a Catholick Divine; and if he does, it would ſeem he had never read his learned Work already referred to [o], where he ſpends fifty-ſix Pages in *Quarto*, in proving to Conviction, that a general Council has Authority over the *Roman* Pontiff, that it can enact Laws, or Canons, which ſhall be obligatory upon him, even tho' he refuſe to come to the Council, and that they can depoſe him for Error, or Crime.

It were eaſy to direct him to whole Aſſemblies of his Catholick Divines, affirming the ſame Doctrine, giving it the Sanction

[n] P. 303.
[o] *De antiq. eccleſ. diſciplin.* Diſſert. 6.

on of a Canon, and *de facto* exerciſing this Authority over Popes. The Proceedings in the Councils of *Piſa*, *Conſtance*, *&c.* were ſo glaring Inſtances of this, that the Gentleman found he could not handle them, without burning his Fingers, and therefore only tells us demurely, that "this was an extraordinary Caſe[p]." But what then? Was it therefore not a true Caſe? Had he ſaid plainly, whether it was right or wrong, that had been to the Purpoſe, and we ſhould have known what to anſwer; but he choſe rather to ſculk under Ambiguities, and quibbling Evaſions.

As I would not, like this Author, ſpeak wickedly for God, nor talk deceitfully even for Religion[q], ſo I find it but a diſagreeable Employment to detect the Frauds of others, and particularly the Sophiſms and Fallacies by which this Author has endeavoured to perplex the Argument, to darken the Truth, (which ſeeks no Corners) and thereby to miſlead the unwary and leſs learned Reader.——If I have uſed him with more Sharpneſs than is common among Gentlemen, and Scholars, it is what I could not avoid; I had ſo often read over his Book, that I fell inſenſibly into his Stile; beſides that,

[p] P. 394.
[q] Job xiii. 7.

that, I was provoked by the Scurrility with which he treats that great Man, Mr. *Leſlie*, whoſe Memory will always be regarded, while Learning and Virtue can conciliate Eſteem.

Enough is ſaid to prove that the *Jeſuits* place the Infallibility in the Pope; --- That other *Roman* Catholicks as flatly deny it reſides there; ---- That they who lodge it in the Pope, and general Council agreeing, ought to tell where it is when they diſagree; --- And that they who place it in the Church diffuſive, (as this Author ſeems to do) [r] or " in all the Biſhops and Paſtors " throughout the whole World, profeſſing " the ſame Doctrine, and united in Faith " and Communion with their ſupreme Pa- " ſtor, the Biſhop of *Rome*," ought to have told us, where it is to be found when this ſupreme Paſtor proves heretical, or is depoſed, which has happened oftner than once.

After all this, gravely to tell the World, that there is " no Confuſion or Diſcrepan- " cy among *Roman* Catholicks on this " Subject; but that there is a perfect Har- " mony and Agreement amongſt them, in " every eſſential Point relating to this Que- " ſtion [s];" was ſuch a Contradiction, ſuch an

[r] P. 309.
[s] P. 309,---311.

an Affront to Truth, to Hiſtory, and to common Senſe, that I wonder how this Gentleman ventured his Reputation upon it. I ſhall therefore take Leave of him for this Time, making my humble Requeſt to the God of Truth, "that he would deliver "my Soul from lying Lips, and from a de- "ceitful Tongue[t]."

§ II. As little are they agreed what Sort of Infallibility it is they contend for: 'Tis entertaining enough to read the odd Accounts they give of it; that it is ſupernatural, but not divine; that it is preciſe Infallibility, but not abſolute; that it is not by immediate Revelation, but by immediate Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, *&c.*----Something they would have, but they cannot tell what; an Infallibility in the Concluſion, without any in the Uſe of Means; an Infallibility by immediate Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, and yet but in ſome Sort divine; an Infallibility, as ſupernatural, and as certain, as the ſacred Scriptures, yet not coming by immediate Inſpiration, as theſe Scriptures did.

Reaſon and Experience tell us, that all Men are naturally frail and fallible; for the human Underſtanding is finite, and circumſcribed;

[t] Pſal. cxx. 2.

ſcribed; and where there is a Defect in the Apprehenſion, there is a Poſſibility of miſtaking; and this Defect is not to be ſupplied but by the Gift of Heaven, communicating a Ray of the Divinity to the Perſon or Perſons thus highly favoured. This, like other Gifts of the Spirit [u], was neceſſary in the Infancy of Chriſtianity, when the Church was to be founded, and a perpetual Rule of our Faith and Practice to be eſtabliſhed; but when that was done, it ceaſed, as being no longer neceſſary; as the Scaffolding is taken away, when the Houſe is built.

St. *Peter*, ſpeaking of the inſpired Authors of holy Scripture, tells plainly how they came by their Infallibility, "Holy "Men of God (ſays he) ſpake as they "were moved by the Holy Ghoſt [x]." And in ſo far as they were thus moved, in ſo far they were infallible, and no farther; yet theſe Gentlemen, whoſe Arguments I am to examine, claim an equal Regard and Submiſſion to the Infallibility of their Church, (in Fact greater than the Apoſtles ever claimed to themſelves) tho' they have not adventured (and I hope will not adventure) to ſay, ſhe has any ſuch immediate Mo-

[u] 1 Cor. xii. 8.
[x] 2 Pet. i. 21.

Motion of the Holy Ghoſt, as that by which their Infallibility came, or is inſpired, as they were.

Indeed they might, with equal Modeſty, compliment her with the one, as with the other; and if they did, it would not mend the Matter much; for an Enthuſiaſt will pretend to be thus moved, when he really is not: But we, who are commanded "to try "the Spirits," and forbidden "to believe "every Spirit[y]," muſt not lay undue Streſs on the bare Word of every confident Aſſertor, in a Caſe of ſo great Importance; unleſs we ſee the ſupernatural Power of God in his Hands, we are not bound to believe he has the infallible Truth of God in his Mouth.

When Infallibility was upon Earth, it was accompanied with Miracles, as its proper Vouchers; and there is Reaſon to think, that theſe two ſhould come and go together. Our bleſſed Saviour appealed "to the Works "which he did, for the Truth of what he "taught[z];" and his Apoſtles "confirmed "the Word with Signs following[a]."

Let the Church of *Rome*, therefore, prove her Infallibility by the ſame Means by which Jeſus

[y] 1 John iv. 1.
[z] St. John x. 37.
[a] St. Mark xvi. 20. Acts xiv. 3. Heb. ii. 4.

Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles proved their Poſſeſſion of that extraordinary Privilege; and then it will be Time to require our Aſſent and Submiſſion to it. I fancy theſe zealous Gentlemen will not venture their Cauſe upon this Iſſue. It would ſeem the ſuſpicious and legendary Miracles of their Church (which have made ſo much Noiſe in the World) will not ſtand the Teſt of Day-light; for even the Author of the Manuſcript has not followed *Bellarmine* ſo far as to number Miracles among the many Marks of his Church [b]; which Marks (after all his Labour) will not come up to what he aims at; for tho' they may prove a Church to be true, they will not prove her to be infallible.

§ III. When ſo much Duſt is raiſed about this Infallibility they contend for, it may not be amiſs to enquire, what Purpoſes would be ſerved by it, if they had it, or for what Reaſons Almighty God (who does nothing in vain) ſhould continue ſo extraordinary a Privilege to any Man, or Number of Men, in the World: And if it ſhould appear, that they neither know what Kind of Infallibility they claim, nor

 where

[b] Parag. 19.

where it is lodged, nor what good Purpoſe it would ſerve, even if it was found, it muſt be allowed, that they have given the World more than enough of needleſs Trouble on this Subject.

Some of the Advocates for that Church have told us, " That it is agreeable to the " Goodneſs of God to give Men an infal- " lible Guide to ſecure them againſt Er- " ror [c]." But are not Errors in Practice as damnable as Errors in Judgment? And is it not as agreeable to the Goodneſs of God to give an abſolute Security againſt Sin, as well as againſt Hereſy, when they are equally dangerous? So that this trite Reaſon for Infallibility will prove too much, or prove nothing; for it will either bear out a Pretence of Impeccability in that Church, or not that of Infallibility.---Let them chooſe which they pleaſe. The firſt (I ſuppoſe) they will not pretend to, and therefore the other we cannot allow them.

An infallible living Judge, to ſecure Men againſt Error, would look ſomewhat like conſtant *irreſiſtible Grace*, to reſtrain them from Sin. God may give both upon ſome extraordinary Occaſions, if he pleaſes; but to continue them for ordinary Uſe, would be too

[c] Shorteſt Way, &c. P. 256.

too ſtrong a Remedy, as it would thwart his own Oeconomy, and deſtroy his own Scheme, by determining the Freedom of our Wills and Actions; which would leave little or no Virtue in our Faith or Obedience, and bring their beloved Doctrine of Merit down to the Ground.

'Tis true, we have an infallible Rule of our Faith and Actions, the *Word of God*, as it has been underſtood, interpreted, and applied, by the catholick, conſentient Teſtimony of the whole Church, eſpecially in her earlieſt and pureſt Ages; and the Spirit of God offers to all the Faithful, ſufficient Light and Aſſiſtance to apply this Rule, and conform themſelves to it: But this ſtill leaves Room for their own Ingenuity and Concurrence, which the other would exclude and ſuperſede. If they uſe this Aſſiſtance well, and follow this Direction carefully, they need no more to make them "wiſe unto Salvation," that is, to be good and happy; if not, God "will not al-"ways ſtrive with Men," nor force that which he once made free: The Grace he offers is ſufficient, but not irreſiſtible; ſuch Grace, as that we may believe and obey in Virtue of it, not ſuch as that we muſt.

So that, having this infallible Rule of our Faith and Practice, and the Grace of the Go-

ſpel offering ſufficient Aſſiſtance to follow it, if we pleaſe, we neither need nor ſhould deſire any other; for if theſe have not their Influence upon the Minds and Lives of Men, 'tis plain this additional Help, which the Church of *Rome* has deviſed, would not mend the Matter. As *Abraham* (in the Parable[d]) ſaid to the rich Man, "If they "hear not *Moſes* and the Prophets, neither "will they be perſuaded, tho' one roſe from "the dead:"----So it is in this Caſe; if an infallible Rule will not ſuffice to make us good and happy, no more would an infallible Guide, if we had him.

The two Gentlemen with whom I now deal, (whatever they might mean) have not ſpoke the plain Language which other Writers for their Church have done; --- "That "the ſacred Scripture is an incompleat Rule, "and therefore muſt have its Defects ſup-"plied by the Directions of a living infal-"lible Judge."----But this is a flat Contradiction to an Apoſtle, who ſays they are perfect; [e] "All Scripture is given by In-"ſpiration of God, and is profitable for "Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, "for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, that the "Man of God may be perfect, *&c.*" And in-

[d] St. Luke, xvi.
[e] 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

indeed if they were not ſo, we might juſtly wonder how our bleſſed Lord ſhould command "to ſearch the Scriptures[f]," even upon the moſt important Account, without ſaying one Word of any other infallible Direction or Guide, as a neceſſary Supplement to them.

If they ſay, the Scriptures are dark and obſcure, they muſt at leaſt allow, (unleſs they'll give the Lie to St. *Paul*) there is as much plain in them as is able to make the Man of God perfect; which is all that is wanted; for tho' it is true, "there are dark Places in "them, and hard to be underſtood, which "the unlearned and unſtable do wreſt to "their own Deſtruction," yet that does not hinder the main Deſign, any more than the *maculæ* in the Sun hinder him to give Light to the World: There is as much plain and obvious in them, as can anſwer the Purpoſes of a Rule, and lead on the ſober, ſincere, and attentive Reader of them, in his Way to Heaven, and that is enough.

As I have already hinted, that ſome of the Writers on that Side have attacked the holy Scriptures with great Audaciouſneſs and Indiſcretion, I muſt now obſerve, that even their Church has ſhewed no ſmall Jealouſy

[f] St. John, v. 39.

louſy of the Word of God, by rendering it as uſeleſs to the Laity in Popiſh Countries as ſhe could, keeping it carefully out of their Hands, or (which is almoſt as bad) allowing them the Uſe of it, only in ſuch a Language as the Generality of them do not underſtand. But we need not wonder to find them ſo much againſt Scripture, when theſe holy Scriptures are ſo much againſt them.

We ſhall no doubt be told, (what has often been repeated in their controverſial Writings) that the Scriptures being obſcure and ambiguous, we may miſtake the Meaning of them, without the Aid of an unfailing Director, becauſe, when we lay Streſs on our private Judgment, it is apt to miſlead us. This is carefully inculcated in every Attempt they make to bring Proteſtants into their Communion; and their Miſſionaries ſeldom fail to ſhew their Diſlike of *private Judgment*, and their Spite at them who plead for the Uſe of it; whereof I ſhall give a remarkable Inſtance in the next Page.

But as it is unconceivable, why a wiſe and good God ſhould endue Men with a Faculty of judging, if he intended to deny them the Privilege of uſing that Faculty; ſo I hope we may be allowed to ask this plain Queſtion, *i. e.* "How ſhall we under-

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" ſtand the Deciſions of a living infallible " Judge, if we had him, and had Acceſs to " him?" Certainly it muſt be by the Exerciſe of this very condemn'd Faculty, this private Judgment, unleſs we are to underſtand his Definitions without Judgment, and ſubſcribe without reading them, which is the Thing theſe Gentlemen would bring us to, tho' they do not yet ſpeak it out plain.

Now, if we may and muſt uſe our Reaſon and Judgment in one Caſe, why not in another? Is there not a Poſſibility that it may miſlead us, in underſtanding the Definitions of this unerring Guide, as well as in underſtanding the holy Scriptures? the Traditions of Men, as well as the Commandments of God? And if we may thus miſtake his Meaning, there can be no Way to render this boaſted Privilege of that Church uſeful, but one of theſe two, *i. e.* either that we be infallible ourſelves, and then we ſhould not need their infallible Guide; or elſe that we had another infallible Judge to interpret his Meaning; and this would multiply Infallibilities to Infinity: So that this Matter muſt at laſt be reſolved either into private Judgment, or elſe every private Chriſtian of that Communion muſt be infallible, which is more than is contended for.

And here again I muſt meet with my Acquaintance

quaintance, the Author of *The ſhorteſt Way*, &c. who (upon this Article) has made a fierce Attack on the Character of my worthy Friend, the Author of *The Caſe ſtated*, becauſe that in ſome of his Writings (thoſe eſpecially againſt the *Socinians* and Deiſts) he had recommended a Reverence for, and proper Submiſſion to Authority; but in his *Caſe ſtated*, he bids us truſt our private Judgment.

Here the Gentleman fancies he has him faſt, within the Horns of a *Dilemma*, and is not a little fond of it: " " This (ſays " he) looks indeed ſomething like a Con- " tradiction. ---- Let us hear his frightful " Character of private Judgment, in his *Chri-* " *ſtianity demonſtrated*, *p.* 181, 182.---But " we muſt conſider, that in his *Chriſtianity* " *demonſtrated*, he wrote againſt the Deiſts, " and in his *Caſe ſtated*, againſt the Papiſts; " and is it reaſonable to oblige a Man to " fight with the ſame Arms againſt all Sorts " of Enemies? By no Means. As he has " writ a great deal, he might eaſily forget, " in writing his *Caſe ſtated*, what he wrote " in his *Chriſtianity demonſtrated*; for a Man " is not bound to remember every Thing that " he does[g]." With Abundance more of Sneer, to the ſame good Purpoſe.

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[g] Shorteſt Way, &c. P. 264, 266.

Here is the Charge brought forth againſt the Author of *The Caſe ſtated*, in this Gentleman's own Words, and with his wonted Politeneſs, and Regard to Truth.

But let us now conſider the Caſe as it really was, ſtript of all Flouriſh and falſe Colouring, and ſee what Reaſon there was for all this Triumph and Inſult. The Matter of Fact is plainly this: ---- Mr. *Leſlie*, (not in his *Chriſtianity demonſtrated*, as the Gentleman ſeems to have been told, but in his Treatiſe of *private Judgment and Authority in Matters of Faith*) Mr. *Leſle*, (I ſay) like a fair Reaſoner, and an honeſt Man, had enumerated the Inconveniencies attending each Side of the Queſtion.

Thoſe ariſing from a bad Uſe of private Judgment, he plainly and honeſtly lays before his Reader, in the Words (truly enough) recited by the Gentleman, --- "That "the Effects of it are, Multiplicity of Sects "and Opinions, perpetual Wranglings, "without any Umpire, or Judge of Con"troverſy; whence come inveterate Preju"dices againſt each other, Animoſities, "Strifes, Envyings, and all the Wars of "Religion, which, the moſt of any, em"broil the Peace of the World, *&c.*"

But what then? Does he therefore diſclaim, and renounce and give up private

Judgment? Let us hear him out, and we ſhall find where he points: ---For after narrating the Miſchiefs which have happened, or can happen, from a wrong Exerciſe of private Judgment, he immediately proceeds to ſhew, (even to Demonſtration) that the Miſchiefs ariſing from an implicite Acquieſcence in Church Authority, in Matters of Faith, have been greater than ever reſulted or enſued from private Judgment; --- That it was upon this Principle of Adheſion to Authority, that the *Jews* rejected and crucified the Meſſiah; --- That the ſovereign Pontiff among them, and his Conclave, darkened and over-ruled all the Evidence of our Lord's Miſſion and Character, ariſing from the ancient Types and Prophecies, or from his Miracles, his Doctrines, and holy Life, by this ſingle Argument, that they were the ſupreme infallible Judges in theſe Matters, and ſince they had not determined in his Favour, the People had no Right to enquire.--- [h] "Have any of the Rulers, or of the "Phariſees believed on him? But this Peo-"ple who knoweth not the Law are cur-"ſed:" --- That the Promiſes of Perpetuity and Infallibility made to the *Jewiſh* Church [i], were as peremptory, and ſeeming-

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[h] St. John, vii. 48, 49.
[i] Mal. ii. 7. Iſa. lix. 21.

ly unconditional, as theſe upon which the *Romiſh* Church founds her high Claim, with this Odds, that the *Jewiſh* Church is named, or deſcribed, in the one, but the *Romiſh* Church is not in the other; and yet it was a Miſunderſtanding of theſe Promiſes, which led the governing Part of the *Jews*, and the Groſs of their Nation, to crucify our Saviour, and reject his Religion; ſo that not one of them acknowledged the one, or embraced the other, but they who followed their private Judgment, in Oppoſition to Authority;--- That it is the ſame unhappy Conceit which detains the *Jews* ſtill in Unbelief, and the *Romaniſts* in their Errors, to this Day, *&c. &c.*

And after a moſt diſtinct and deciſive Account of this Matter, after he has ſhewed the Caſes wherein Submiſſion is due to Authority, and thoſe wherein it is not due, that in Matters of Worſhip, Diſcipline and Ceremony, Church Authority is ſupreme and abſolute, but in Matters of Faith it is only miniſterial, *&c.* --- He has this remarkable Paragraph, [k] "If upon Enquiry (ſays "he) it ſhould be found, that *greater Miſ-* "*chiefs* have attended *private Judgment* "than *Authority*, yet would that be no

[k] P. 106.

" greater Argument againſt *private Judg-*
" *ment* than againſt *Free-will*, or any other
" Compoſition of our Nature, if the Miſ-
" chiefs it occaſions were more than the
" Good. We cannot alter our Nature; it
" muſt be as it is. Perhaps Men make Uſe
" of their Hands to more Deſtruction in
" Wars, Murders, Robberies, Thefts, *&c.*
" than any Good they do with them; yet
" this would be an ill Argument for cutting
" off the Hands of our Children, as ſoon
" as they were born; and it would be worſe
" ſtill to diveſt Men of their Underſtanding,
" becauſe their *private Judgment* might miſ-
" lead them."

A candid Adverſary would have laid all this before his Reader, told him the whole Truth, and nothing but Truth, and then left him to judge, whether Mr. *Leſlie* had once been an Enemy to private Judgment, and had now involved himſelf in a Contradiction.---But this was not for the Gentleman's Purpoſe.

I beg my Reader's Pardon for this Digreſſion, if it is one, and ſhall travel no farther at preſent in ſuch diſagreeable Company; only I muſt obſerve, that this Gentleman's great Strength ſeems to ly in his long Hair; his chief Talent conſiſts in burleſquing an Author he cannot confute, and miſre-

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preſenting an Argument he cannot anſwer; he brings together broken Sentences, diſtant Paragraphs, and forced Meanings, and ſets them to combat one another, (a Method by which any Book in the World, even the Bible itſelf, may be brought into Contempt) that having thus dreſt his Antagoniſt in a Fool's Coat, he may be hiſs'd off the Stage. This is his ſhorteſt Way to end Diſputes about Religion, but one would think it is not like to be the ſafeſt.

In ſhort, the Demand the *Romiſh* Church makes on her Votaries, to give up their private Judgment, leſt it may lead them into Error, is equally ſuſpicious and extravagant as it would be to cut off a Man's Head, to prevent a Pimple in his Face.---- Every Attempt her Miſſionaries make upon Proteſtants, to unhinge their Profeſſion, and bring them into her Communion, is an Appeal to their private Judgment, unleſs they expect we are to take Tales upon Truſt, be perſuaded without conſidering, and make a final Reſignation of our Reaſon, without conſulting it, in which, I hope, they'll find themſelves miſtaken; for if (even by their own Confeſſion) we muſt uſe that Faculty of judging which God has given us, and truſt it too, e're we can be brought to their infallible Guide, why may it not as well

well ſerve to lead and keep us in the right Way?

§ IV. It is fit to obſerve, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and his Apoſtles (who were really infallible) made a more diſcreet Uſe of that Privilege than the *Romiſh* Church does of the bare Pretence to it; I mean, that they did not demand Belief on that ſingle Account, that they were infallible, but dealt with Men as with rational Agents, appealed to their Reaſon and common Senſe, and laid before them proper Motives of Conviction, without exacting an implicite Aſſent on the Head of Authority, or unerring Direction.

Thus we are commanded,[k] "to ſearch the "Scriptures," and the *Bereans* are commended for doing ſo. We are enjoined to "take heed what we hear," and "how we "hear;" -- to "beware of falſe Prophets;" to "prove all Things;" --- to "prove our-"ſelves, and examine whether we be in the "Faith; --- to "try the Spirits;" --- and "not to receive any Doctrine contrary to, "or differing from that which the Apoſtles "taught, however it came recommended, "even

[k] St. John, v. 19. Acts xvii. 2. St. Mark, iv. 24. St. Luke, viii. 18. St. Matth. vii. 15. 1 Theſſ. v. 21. 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 1 John, iv. 1. Gal. i. 8.

" even if it were brought by an Angel from " Heaven."

What can be the Meaning of all these Injunctions, if our own Reason and Industry are quite excluded; so that we must by no Means labour to satisfy ourselves what Ground our Faith stands upon, nor judge for ourselves as well as we are able, but resign ourselves to another to judge for us, because forsooth he has the Confidence to call himself infallible.

When we compare the Infallibility which the Apostles were possessed of, with that which the *Romish* Church pretends to, and the Uses made of it by both, the one disclaiming all " Dominion over the Faith of " Christians[1], and the other usurping a Dominion over not only their Faith, but their Reason and common Sense; one can scarce forbear thinking of the Odds between a Physician and a Mountebank; the one is very modest and unassuming, while the other brags of infallible Remedies.

Let us suppose a Man travelling thro' an unknown Country, where having lost his Way, and coming to a Place where there are several Roads pointing differently, he is uncertain which to choose; --- That in this Perplexity he calls for a Guide, upon which two

[1] 2 Cor. i. 24.

two of them come to offer their Aſſiſtance; one of them lays before him an approved authentick Chart or Map of the Country, and offers to vouch thereby every Period of his Direction.——The other does not deny this to be a true Map, yet pulls it out of the Traveller's Hand, brags of his own great Skill and Abilities, and refuſes to take Charge of the Man till he would agree to pull out his own Eyes, and abſolutely reſign all to the Conduct and Management of his Conductor. It is not difficult to judge which of the two contending Guides the bewildered Traveller ought to prefer.

It is juſt ſo in the preſent Caſe: The ſpiritual Pride and Arrogance of the *Romiſh* Church, in claiming this divine Attribute as her peculiar Property, gives Ground to ſuſpect her of Trick and ill Deſign; and the Hiſtories of Chriſtendom confirm this Suſpicion, by informing us, that ever ſince ſhe uſurped this Privilege, it has produced moſt diſmal Effects, wherever ſhe had Power enough to ſupport theſe bold Pretenſions which ſhe never could ſupport by other Means; ſo that if I was to look for Infallibility in any particular Church upon Earth, that of *Rome* would be the laſt I ſhould expect to find it in.

In ſhort, if the Belief of that Church's

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Infallibility be so fundamental an Article of Faith as they would make it, it is surprising, that neither Jesus Christ, nor his Apostles, should ever say one Word of it. How comes it to pass, that when there were so many Schisms and Heresies in the primitive Times, (particularly in the Churches of *Corinth* and *Galatia*, *&c.*) St. *Paul* should never once mention this effectual Remedy of all those Evils, by sending them to St. *Peter*, the only infallible Judge of Controversies? This would have been an excellent Direction to the Church in after Ages, what to have done in like Cases, had our Saviour, or any of his Apostles, given an Intimation, that the Heir of Infallibility was fixed at *Rome*, and that thither we were to have Recourse for deciding all Controversies in Religion.

These are some of the many Difficulties and Contradictions with which this Doctrine of Infallibility in the *Romish* Church is attended; so many, and so glaring, that nothing can be more absurd, unless it is some of those fanciful Notions they have raised upon that crazy Foundation. If the Author of the Manuscript now under my Eye, had dealt fairly with them he meant to proselite to his Communion, he ought to have shewed them the Question on all Sides, and obviated the Difficulties which stood in the

Way of their Conviction, before he had given them the Trouble of a long, laboured Proof of ſomething he would fain have; tho', after all, it is hard to know what, or where it is to be found. But ſince he did not think that fit, I judged it would not be improper for me to do it for him, by laying ſome of them open to View, before I proceeded to examine his Proof, which will be done in its proper Place [m].

CHAP. II.

The Nature, and true Notion of the Church, (i. e. *the Catholick or Univerſal Church*) *laid open, and eſtabliſhed, with ſome Remarks made on Popiſh Writers, and their Way of reaſoning.*

WHAT the learned Mr. *Du Pin* has (with ſo much Wiſdom and Strength) ſaid againſt the Infallibility of the Biſhop of *Rome*, I may ſay concerning that of the Church of *Rome*: [n] "When (ſays he) the "common Nature and Condition of all "Men is ſuch, that they are obnoxious to "many and various Errors, God can beſtow "no greater Privilege upon any Mortal, "than an abſolute Immunity from Error, "eſpe-

[m] Chap. 3d and 4th.

[n] *De antiq. eccl. diſciplin.* Diſſert. 5. p. 339.

" eſpecially in thoſe Things, the Knowledge
" whereof, altho' neceſſary, is yet above
" the Comprehenſion of our Reaſon; but
" the greater and more excellent this Gift
" is, the more careful we ought to be, not
" to aſcribe it to any, raſhly, and without
" Foundation; for, beſides that it is a pro-
" fane and unworthy Thing to aſcribe an
" Authority to any that is not competent,
" nothing can be more hazardous than to
" believe him infallible who may err; for
" if it happens, that he actually does err,
" they are neceſſarily led into Error who
" believed him infallible, becauſe they muſt
" adhere to that Authority which they think
" ſuch. Therefore, (continues he) none
" is obliged to believe this Infallibility, un-
" leſs it is demonſtrated with ſo much
" Strength and Clearneſs, that there re-
" main no Room for doubting; for if it is
" only probable, there is a Poſſibility left
" that it may be falſe."

Here is a very wiſe, judicious Caution, given by a moſt eminent Doctor of that Church: How well the Author of the Manuſcript has obſerved it, we ſhall ſee when his Proof is examined, which (with God's Aſſiſtance) I intend to do, in the very Order he has laid it, after I have notified to the Reader, that his Way of writing, tho' it

carries an Air of great Plainneſs and Simplicity, is yet very artful and enſnaring.

I ſhall have Occaſion to obſerve this in ſeveral Inſtances, when his Arguments are brought forth into broad Day.---At preſent I ſhall only give one Sample of it, fit to be given before I go further, and that is, his darkening and perplexing the Notion of the Church, blending and confounding the Church of Chriſt, or the Catholick Church, with the Church of *Rome*; as if theſe two Names were of the ſame Signification and Import, and meant the ſame Thing.

Thus (Paragraph 2d) " he begins very " ſmoothly and plauſibly, with the Infalli- " bility of Chriſt's Church, or that great " Authority which Chriſt has given her; " but ſome Time after, (in his 18th and " 19th Paragraphs) he confines this great " Privilege and Authority to the Church " in Communion with the Biſhop of *Rome*, " which he (very modeſtly) ſays, is this " Catholick Church, or Chriſt's Church."

Sure if the Gentleman had written as many Pages, to convince his intended Converts, that a Part is equal to the whole; that univerſal and particular imply the ſame Thing; that a gangren'd Member is a whole ſound Body; that the City of *Rome* is all *Italy*, or all the World; or that the Mem-

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ber of Parliament for the Shire in which I live, is the Repreſentative of all *Scotland*; he could not have been thought to have advanced ſtronger Contradictions, nor to have addreſſed the good Judgment of his Diſciples in a leſs courteous Manner.

It is ſo much the Intereſt of the *Romiſh* Miſſionaries to have this Matter perplexed, that they ſpare no Pains to do it: On the other Side, to have it rightly ſtated, and well underſtood, is of great Conſequence to us, in all our Differences with them. What has been written on this Subject by reformed Catholicks, has cleared it up, to the Satisfaction of the unprejudiced, and ſhewed evidently, that the Church of *Rome* (notwithſtanding all her big Words, and vain Boaſts of Infallibility, Univerſality, *&c.*) is ſo far from being the whole Catholick Church, that ſhe is but a very corrupted, diſeaſed Part of her.

I ſhall only obſerve here, (to ſave my Reader the Labour of conſulting great Volumes) that the Nature, Conſtitution, and Extent of the Catholick Church, may be collected from the very Commiſſion, in virtue whereof it was formed.

§ I. The Commiſſion in Virtue whereof the Church of Chriſt was formed into a So-

Society, or Body corporate, is (as we find it in the Goſpels) directed to all the Apoſtles in common, who were to act in Concert, and in a perfect Equality, Jeſus Chriſt reſerving to himſelf the Privilege of being the Center of this Unity, the Head of this Body, and ſupreme Governor of his own ſpiritual Kingdom, the Church; and it runs in theſe Terms, "That they ſhould go, and "teach (or make Diſciples of) all Nati-"ons, *&c.* --- that they ſhould preach Re-"pentance, and Remiſſion of Sins, in his "Name, among all Nations, beginning at *Je-*"*ruſalem*; -- and that they ſhould abide at *Je-*"*ruſalem* till they were endued with Power "from on high[o]." This Power was actually communicated to them by the miraculous Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt on the Day of *Pentecoſt*, the Symbol by which it was conveyed, being given to all alike; for the fiery cloven Tongues lighted and ſat, not on St. *Peter* only, but upon each of them, and all the Apoſtles were filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and begun to ſpeak with other Tongues, as well as he.

Thus, furniſhed with their Commiſſion, and with extraordinary Abilities to execute it, they went forth, and preached the Goſpel

[o] St. Matth. xxviii. 19. St. Luke, xxiv. 47, 49. Acts ii. 1, 2, 3. 4.

ſpel in *Jeruſalem*, in *Judea*, and *Samaria*, and to the utmoſt Parts of the Earth. By their Labours, their Travels, and their Sufferings, they propagated the glad Tidings of Salvation throughout the World. Tho' they were united in the main Deſign, and tho' their Office and Powers were the ſame, yet their Provinces were diſtinct; by which Means "their Sound went out into all the "Earth, and their Words unto the Ends of the "World:" And in whatever Place or Country of the World the Chriſtian Religion was promulged and eſtabliſhed by their Miniſtry, or that of their Succeſſors in Office, (ſent by them, as they were by Chriſt) whereſoever the Faith once delivered to the Saints, the Doctrine, Worſhip and Polity, left by Chriſt to his Church, has been, is, or ſhall be received, retained, and profeſſed, there is a true and proper Part of the *One Catholick Church*, as true and proper as at *Antioch*, or *Rome*, where St. *Peter* laboured in Perſon;---and all theſe Parts together make up the *one holy Catholick* and *Apoſtolick*, or *Univerſal Church*.

This is evidently what St. *Paul* means by the "many Members, and yet but one "Body, whereof Chriſt is the Head;" and by

Acts i. 8. Rom. x. 18. 1 Cor. xii. 20. Rom. xvi. 4. 1 Cor. vii. 17.

by his mentioning in ſome Places, " all the " Churches," and in other Places, ſpeaking only of one Church, or the whole Chriſtian Church, (the Body aggregate, conſiſting of all theſe Parts) which he ſays, " was " built upon the Foundation of the A- " poſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt him- " ſelf being the chief Corner Stone."

§ II. This plain Account of the Catholick Church, as it is agreeable to the holy Scriptures, and to the Nature and Reaſon of the Thing, ſo is it to the Sentiments of the ancient *Fathers*, thoſe great Lights of the primitive Church. Thus

St. *Cyprian* ſays, [p] " The Church is one, " diſtinguiſh'd into many Members, through- " out the whole World, and that there is " *one Epiſcopate*, diffuſed thro' the whole " agreeing Numbers of many Biſhops.

St. *Cyril* of *Jeruſalem* (explaining that Article of the Creed, *one holy Catholick Church*) ſays, [q] " ſhe is called Catholick, " becauſe ſhe is diffuſed thro' the whole " Earth, from one End to the other; be- " cauſe ſhe teaches catholickly or univerſal- " ly, and without any Defect, all the Do- " ctrines

2 Cor. xi. 28. Epheſ. ii. 20.

[p] *D. Cyprian. epiſt. 52. ad Anton. & Lib. de unit. eccleſ.*

[q] *D. Cyril. Catecheſ.* 18.

" ctrines which ought to be known and be-
" lieved; and becauſe ſhe ſubdues and com-
" prehends all Sorts of Men, Princes and
" private Perſons, learned and unlearned."

Theſe Fathers, (with others which might be quoted to the ſame Purpoſe) by the Catholick Church, underſtood the Church ſpread over the Face of the whole Earth, but never mention the Church of *Rome* as the Catholick Church; and when ſometimes any of them do ſpeak of her, it is not always ſo much to her Honour, or the Acknowledgment of her ſupreme Authority, as her modern Advocates would have it.

Thus St. *Auguſtine*, [r] writing againſt *Urbicus*, who affirmed the Neceſſity of the Sabbatical Faſt, becauſe it was obſerved in the Church of *Rome*, prefers the Practice of the whole Catholick Church to hers; an evident Sign he thought them diſtinct, and the one Authority inferior to the other.--- St. *Jerom* [s] ſays, " If Authority is ſought " for, that of the World is greater than " that of a City."--And St. *Ambroſe*, ſpeaking of a Cuſtom, (*i. e.* waſhing of the Feet) concerning which he taught differently from his Neighbours at *Rome*, ſays,

[r] *Epiſt.* 86. *ad Caſulanum.*
[s] *Epiſt. ad Evagrium, quæ incipit, Legimus in Eſaia.*

" I would be glad to follow the *Roman* " Church in all Things, but even we have " Understanding, or common Sense, too; " therefore, what is more rightly observed " elsewhere, we rightly hold, We follow " the Apostle *Peter* himself: We imitate " his Devotion. --- What will the *Roman* " Church answer to this?"

This (I humbly think) has a shrewd Look, a strong Tendency to prove against the Author of the Manuscript, that his Notion of the Catholicism and Infallibility of his Church, was not known in those early Ages. 'Tis true they spoke very respectfully of the *Roman* Church, and paid her great Regards, especially while *Rome* was the chief City, or Seat of the Empire; and indeed she well deserved all the Respects paid her in those Days; but while they said discreet Things to her, or of her, they never dream'd of her Infallibility, or of her being the Catholick Church, never pinn'd their Faith to her Sleeve, nor received her Decisions or Definitions implicitely, and on her single Authority.

The Case standing thus, both in the Testimonies of the inspired Writings, and of primitive Antiquity, I must conclude, that the

§ *De sacrament.* Lib. 3. c. 1.

the Author of the Manuſcript did not uſe his Diſciple well, in blending and confounding the Names and Notions of Things, as he has artfully done in this Matter; for which let *Optatus Milevitanus* (writing againſt *Parmenian* the *Donatiſt*) reprove him. The *Donatiſts* were a Sect which vapoured not a little then, (as the *Romiſh* Church does now) with a vain Conceit of their Purity and Privileges, and the great ſwelling Titles they had taken to themſelves. Let us ſee with what Edge and Point *Optatus* baffles theſe bold Pretenſions: * "You ſay, Bro-"ther *Parmenian*, (ſays he) that the Church "is with you alone: Why? but becauſe "your Pride has made you claim ſuch a "ſpecial Sanctity, that the Church muſt be "where you would have her, and not be "where you would not have her; there-"fore, that you may confine the Church "within your narrow Dimenſions, in the "other Parts of the World, where you are "not, ſhe muſt not be." (Here he goes on to mention a great many particular Countries and Churches, and then continues he) "Where is then the Propriety of the Ca-"tholick Name, when ſhe is therefore ſtiled "Catholick, becauſe ſhe is reaſonable, and

* *Optat. Lib. 2. cont. Parmenianum.*

" every where ſpread? For if by your " Whim you ſtraiten the Church, and cut " off all other Countries from her, where " is that which the Son of God purchaſed? " Where is all that which the Father wil- " lingly gave him in the 2d Pſalm, ſaying, " *I will give the Nations for thine Inheri-* " *tance, and the utmoſt Bounds of the Earth* " *for thy Poſſeſſion?* In vain therefore do " ye appropriate this Name to yourſelves, " which rather belongs to us: Perhaps you " will claim a Property in our *Peter*, as if " you had him ſhut up in your Pockets; " ſend him if you can; ſee if he will exclude " the ſeven Angels of our Brethren in *A-* " *ſia*, to whoſe Churches the Apoſtle *John* " wrote.——If we have diſpleaſed you, " what has *Antioch* or *Arabia* done?"

Much more to this Purpoſe is ſaid by *Optatus*, who wrote in the 4th Age; -- but this is ſufficient to ſhew what the Sentiments of the Ancients were on this Subject. But after all, I think it is not juſt, that the Author of the Manuſcript ſhould alone bear all the Reproof of this grave Father, when he is not ſingle in the Fault. Other Writers of his Church have trod the ſame Path before him; they were aware, that the Promiſes in the Goſpel (whatever they contain) belonged to the whole Church of Chriſt; ſo that there

was

was no Way left to appropriate these Promises to the Church of *Rome*, but to make her pass for this whole or Catholick Church.

And here I must commend *Tostatus Abulensis*, (one of their own Bishops) for discovering more Judgment, or more Candour, in this Matter, than the Authors I am now examining have done. "The Catholick "Church (says *Tostatus*) [y] never errs, be- "cause it never errs altogether; but the *La- "tin* (or *Roman*) Church is not the Catho- "lick Church, but only a certain Part of "it; therefore, tho' all of her should err, "yet the Catholick Church would not err, "because the Catholick Church would re- "main in those Parts which do not err, "whether they are greater or less, more in "Number, or fewer, than those which "do."

This was fair and ingenuous in the Bishop of *Avila*, (who wrote in the 15th Century) and what might be expected from one truly influenced by Regards to Truth, and his own Character; for there can be no grosser Contradiction to either, than to put the Church of *Rome* in Possession of all the Promises made, and all the Privileges granted to the Catholick Church. For,

§ III.

[y] *Tostat. præfat. in Matth.* xiii. & 4. ---- & *Prolog.* 2. *in Matth.*

§ III. The *Roman* Church is not the oldeſt Church ; and therefore the Author of the Manuſcript very warily calls her the old Church [b] ; for St. *Peter* was at *Jeruſalem*, and *Antioch*, and was the Apoſtle of the Circumciſion [c], before he was at *Rome*. The original Commiſſion by which the Apoſtles acted, pointed to *Jeruſalem*, for the Beginning of their Miniſtry : At *Antioch* the Chriſtian Name commenced [d] ; and if we may believe Cardinal *Baronius*, and a learned Popiſh Biſhop of our own Country [e], *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* came into *Britain*, and taught us Chriſtianity full as early as they had it at *Rome*.

Neither is ſhe the Mother of all other Churches, tho' Pope *Pius* has made it an Article of his Creed, (without the Belief whereof he would have none ſaved) " that " ſhe is the Mother and Miſtreſs of all " Churches."---But by his good Leave, the Church of *Jeruſalem* muſt be allowed the Mother-Church, elſe the ancient Predictions were not fulfilled, nor the Command of Jeſus Chriſt obeyed ; for the Prophet had

[b] Par. 19.
[c] Gal. ii. 7, 8.
[d] Acts xi. 26.
[e] *Baron. in ann. D.* 35. --- *Leſlæus Ep. Roſſen. in paræneſi edit. cum hiſt. de reb. geſt. Scotorum.*

had foretold, that [f] "the Law ſhould go forth "of *Zion*, and the Word of the Lord from "*Jeruſalem*; --- And our bleſſed Saviour expreſly enjoined his Apoſtles, to [g] "preach "the Goſpel to all Nations, beginning at "*Jeruſalem*."

Neither did the Ancients reckon her a Center of Unity to all other Churches, any more than all the other Apoſtolical Churches were to her, elſe why ſhould the moſt approved Fathers and Hiſtorians of the early Ages be ſo careful to preſerve and bring down to Poſterity, the Succeſſion of the Biſhops of the other great Sees, when that of *Rome* alone might have ſerved the Turn?

Neither is ſhe (what the Author of the Manuſcript modeſtly calls her [h]) the Great Church, either in Point of Extent, or in Point of Juriſdiction and Authority; not in Point of Numbers or Extent, (tho' it would not mend the Matter if ſhe were) for if one looks into the paſt or preſent State of Chriſtendom, he will ſee what little Proportion ſhe bears to all theſe other Churches, which, on Account of her Pride and Impurities, have been at different Times forced

[f] Iſa. ii. 3.
[g] St. Luke, xxiv. 47.
[h] Par. 19.

ced to give up communicating with her; and as for that Juriſdiction and Authority which ſhe claims over other Churches, it is all uſurped, acquired by very bad Means, and was unknown to the firſt and beſt Chriſtians.

It was not St. *Peter*, but St. *James*, who preſided in the Council at *Jeruſalem* [i]; the Biſhop of *Rome* did not preſide in the Council of *Nice*; and it was long e're he claimed a Right, either to his Legates to preſide in Councils, or to himſelf to ratify their Decrees. Pope *Gregory* the Great, even in the 7th Century, diſclaimed the Title of Univerſal Biſhop, and declared it Antichriſtian to pretend to it; and that the Churches of *Scotland*, and of the ancient *Britons*, maintained their Independency of the See of *Rome*, even after *Auguſtine* was ſent into our Iſland, to convert the *Saxons*, we need no other Voucher than their own Hiſtorian *Bede* [k], from whom we may learn, that it was not till the 8th Century that our Anceſtors bowed their Heads to receive the Papal Yoke.

I have ſaid juſt now, that the Biſhop of *Rome* did not preſide in the Council of *Nice*.

i Acts xv.

k *Hiſt. eccleſ. Lib.* 3. *c.* 4.
Vide Forbeſii inſtruct. hiſt. theol. Lib. 3. *c.* 30. *p.* 170.

Nice. Here I have taken the Liberty to contradict the Author of *The ſhorteſt Way*, who (Page 99.) tells us, with his uſual Confidence, that " in the Council of *Nice* a-" gainſt the *Arians*, *Anno* 325, the Legates " of Pope *Sylveſter* preſided together with *O-*" *ſius.*" Which of us was in the right, whether he or I have told the Truth, might be ſhewed by Variety of Evidence; but to ſhorten the Matter, I refer it to the Deciſion of one of his own Communion, (an Author indeed of more Learning and Modeſty than he) I mean Dr. *Du Pin*, who[1] having told us, that this Council was called by the Emperor *Conſtantine*; that it was compoſed of 318 Biſhops, *&c.* adds, that " the Legate " of Pope *Sylveſter* aſſiſted at it; but we " do not certainly know (ſays he) who was " Preſident of that Aſſembly: ---'Tis likely " it was *Oſius* Biſhop of *Corduba.*"

There is another Thing, of which (to prevent future Quibble) it may be proper to adverti ſe my Reader, before I conclude this Chapter, *viz.* That when I ſay the *Roman* Church is not, nor can be the Catholick Church, any more than a Part can be the Whole; by the *Roman* Church, I do not mean the particular Dioceſe or Province

[1] *Eccleſ. hiſt. Vol.* 2. *p.* 12. --- *& Abridg. Vol.* 2. *p.* 124.

of *Rome* only, but I mean all the Churches which live in Communion with, and Subjection to the Biſhop of *Rome*, as Head of the Church, and look on it as neceſſary to Salvation ſo to do. This is what I aſſert to be but a Part of the Catholick Church, and a corrupt one too."

The ancient Creeds mention *one Catholick and Apoſtolick Church*, but the modern Creed of Pope *Pius* has added *Roman* to *Catholick*, which is equally audacious, inept and abſurd; for *Catholick* or *Univerſal*, ſignifies and comprehends all the Parts; but it does not ſo when *Roman* is joined to *Catholick*; for then it excludes all thoſe from being Parts of the Catholick Church which do not join in the *Roman* Communion: And this, I ſay, is unreaſonable, in ſo far as it limits and deſtroys the Meaning of the Word *Catholick*, and is as remote from Truth, as it would be to affirm that the *German* Ocean is the whole Sea.

One of their controverſial Writers about ſeventy Years ago, thinks to ſolve this Difficulty by the Help of his Metaphyſicks. [m] "Ocean (ſays he) is the whole Sea: Is "it not? And is it the leſs the Ocean, be- "cauſe *German* is added to it?" --- No, ſay I, the

[m] Defence of ſome Royal Papers, P. 52.

I, the Ocean is juſt as large as ever it was; but the adding *German* to it reſtrains the Senſe and Meaning of Ocean, to a Part of it, within certain Bounds, and excludes the *Mediterranean*, the *Adriatick*, and *Caſpian* Seas, and many other Parts of the great Ocean, which are without thoſe Limits.

Juſt ſo it is, in adding *Roman* to *Catholick*. *Catholick* alone comprehends all Parts of the Church; but *Roman* added to it confines the Senſe of it to thoſe who embrace the Faith received in the *Roman* Communion, and this excludes all other Parts of the Catholick Church, and ſo makes a Part to be the Whole.

Now, as this Limitation (of *Roman*) was not put into the ancient Creeds, nor indeed was ever put into any Creed before that of Pope *Pius* IV. in the 16th Century; and as Perſons in all Parts of the World, and in all Ages of the Church, and even in the *Roman* Church at this Day, have been, and are baptized into the Faith of the ancient Creed only, I think I may infer, that even the *Roman* Church herſelf did not, nor does, believe, (whatever her preſent Miſſionaries may ſay) that ſhe is the one Catholick Church which we profeſs to believe in the Creed.

For if the *Roman* Church believed itſelf

to be the Catholick Church, it muſt make void the Baptiſm of thoſe who are not of her Communion, which ſhe neither does at preſent, nor ever has done: On the contrary, ſhe ſuſtains and allows the Baptiſm adminiſtred in the *Greek*, Oriental, and Reformed Churches, ſo as never to repeat it.

At the ſame Time, the *Roman* Catechiſm [n] tells us, that "Baptiſm is the Gate by "which we enter into the Church." And the Council of *Trent* [o] aſſerts "the Validi-"ty and Efficacy of the Sacraments in ge-"neral, and of Baptiſm in particular;" and denounces an Anathema againſt them who ſay, "that Children baptized are not to be "reckoned *inter fideles*, *i. e.* to be Mem-"bers of the Catholick Church."

Now, if being baptiſed into the Chriſtian Faith, contained in the ancient Creeds, where there is no Mention of *Roman*, can make us Members of the Catholick Church, nay, if the Baptiſm adminiſtred in thoſe Churches, which are not in the *Roman* Communion, has the ſame Efficacy, (which ſhe allows it has) then I humbly think it follows, by unavoidable Conſequence, that the *Catholick Church*, and the *Roman Catholick*, are not the ſame, ſince thoſe may be Mem-

[n] *Catech. Rom.* Part. 1. C. 10. N. 20.
[o] *Con. Triden. Seſſ.* 7. *Can.* 7, 8, 9, 13.

Members of the Catholick Church, which are not of the *Roman* Catholick.

A very judicious Writer in the laſt Century [p] has ſaid ſomething very clear and ſtrong on this Subject, with which I ſhall ſum up what has been ſaid in this Chapter, and the preceeding: "Whatever depends ſolely upon the Will and Appointment of God, "that which God might do, or might not "do, as he pleaſed, in ſuch Caſes, (ſays he) "our only Enquiry is, What God has actually done? And this can be known "only by Revelation, becauſe it depends "not upon any neceſſary Reaſon, but on "the free and arbitrary Appointment of "God; as St. *Paul* tells us, that [q] *as no Man "knows the Things of a Man, but the Spirit "of a Man that is in him; ſo no Man knoweth "the Things of God, but the Spirit of God.* "--- That is, as no Man can tell the ſecret "Thoughts and Purpoſes of another Man, "nor how he will determine himſelf in "Matters of his own free Choice and Election; ſo what depends purely upon the "Will of God, is known only to the Spirit of God, and therefore can be made "known to us only by Revelation.

"Many ſuch Things there are in Diſpute "be-

[p] Dr. *Sherlock's* Preſervative againſt Popery, P. 38, 39.
[q] 1 Cor. ii. 11.

" between us and the Church of *Rome*,
" which depend ſo entirely upon the Will
" of God, that they may be, or may not
" be, as God pleaſes. As for Inſtance,

" No Man, nor Company of Men, can
" be infallible, unleſs God beſtow Infalli-
" bility on them; for Infallibility is not a
" natural Endowment, but a ſupernatural
" Gift; and therefore no Reaſon can prove
" the Biſhop of *Rome*, or a general Coun-
" cil, to be infallible. God may make
" them infallible, if he pleaſes, and if he
" pleaſes, he may not do it; and therefore,
" our only Enquiry here is, what God has
" done? and this can be known only by
" Revelation.

" Thus, that the Church of *Rome* on-
" ly, and thoſe Churches that are in Com-
" munion with her, ſhould be the Catho-
" lick Church, and the Biſhop of *Rome*
" the oecumenical Paſtor, and the Center of
" Catholick Unity, muſt depend wholly
" upon Inſtitution; for nothing but the
" Will and Appointment of God can give
" this Pre-eminence and Prerogative to the
" Church and Biſhop of *Rome*, above all
" other Churches and Biſhops. No Rea-
" ſon then can prove this, without plain
" and expreſs Scripture to prove ſuch an In-
" ſtitution, *&c.*"

Let

Let us hold by this, and we ſhall ſoon ſee how their Proof will come out.

I thought it was fit to clear up this Matter, before I proceeded to their Proofs; and it will be fit for my Reader, to carry on in his Mind this diſtinct Notion of the Catholick Church, and of the Difference between the *Roman* and the Catholick Church, becauſe it will frequently occur in conſidering the Authorities from Scripture and Fathers. To the firſt whereof I now proceed.

CHAP. III.

In which the Texts from Scripture, brought in Proof of the Romiſh Infallibility, *are conſidered, and the true Senſe of thoſe Texts unfolded and explained.*

THE firſt Proof of *Romiſh* Infallibility brought by the Author of the Manuſcript, is fetched from Chriſt's Promiſe, St. *Matth.* xvi. 18. which he reads thus, [p] "Thou art *Peter*, (that is a Rock) and "upon this Rock I will build my Church, "and the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail a-"gainſt

[p] Parag. 2.

" gainſt it. --- Nothing can be ſtronger, and " more expreſs, than theſe Words, (ſays he) " to ſhew the unſhaken Stability of the " Church, being built by the wiſeſt of " all Builders upon a Rock, Proof againſt " all Floods and Storms, and we being aſ- " ſured by Chriſt himſelf, that the Gates, " or all the Powers of Hell, can never pre- " vail againſt her, which certainly they " would, if ſhe could fall into Hereſies, or " pernicious Corruptions and Errors, con- " trary to the Faith Chriſt taught her."

The Author of *The ſhorteſt Way*, [q] begins with the ſame Text, only he introduces it with more Solemnity, and much Flouriſh, he aſſures us, the Words are plain and obvious, and can bear no other Senſe than that in which the *Roman* Catholick Church has always underſtood them. " I " appeal (ſays he) to the Word of God, " for the Truth and Juſtice of the Cauſe " I have undertaken: The Word of God " ſhall be the Judge between the Church of " *Rome*, and the reformed Churches. 'Tis " by this Rule I deſire this important Cauſe " may be decided, *&c.*"

This is well ſaid, and fairly promiſed; and ſince he has choſen his Weapon, with all

[q] Part 1. P. 17. to 25.

all my Heart I accept of it; I can desire no other, tho' I am afraid he will soon grow weary of it, when he finds it like *Saul*'s Armour on *David*, that he can neither walk nor fight with it.

Of this we have a Specimen in the very next Page: "Let us consider (says he) our "Saviour's Words to St. *Peter*, recorded "in the 16th Chapter of St. *Matthew*, I "give them the first Place, as being the "clearest and strongest Proof of an infal-"lible Church; for they contain an abso-"lute and unconditional Promise, there be-"ing no Condition either expressed or hint-"ed at in the whole Text."

Very well begun with the Word of God.---Sir, one would have expected, if not more Skill, at least less Confidence, in handling a Weapon you are so little accustomed to use; but let not him that puts on his Armour, boast as he that puts it off. Whether this Text contains a Promise of Infallibility to the Church of *Rome*, and whether this Promise is absolute and unconditional, is the Design of this Chapter to discover.

Before I go farther, it will be fit to observe of this Argument, as it is brought forth by these Gentlemen, 1*st*, That they suppose St. *Peter* to have been the Rock on which the Church is built; which is what

Logicians call *petitio principii*, or begging the Queſtion, by ſuppoſing that for true, or granted, which is a Subject of Diſpute. 2*dly*, Tho' one of theſe Authors thinks he ſpies out Infallibility in this Promiſe, yet the other, who wrote later, is more cautious and reſerved, and infers from it only the unſhaken Stability of his Church ; and we ſhall ſee by and by, that there is a Difference between Infallibility and Indefectibility, between continuing to the End of the World, and being abſolutely ſecured againſt the Poſſibility of ever falling into any Error. 3*dly*, This Promiſe, which (whatever it contains) is made to the whole Church, is by them reſtrained and applied to a particular one, which is but a Part of this Whole, and is neither the beſt nor greateſt Part.

So that when this Argument is put into Form, it comes out in this Shape: " Chriſt " has promiſed ſo great Stability or Durati- " on to his *whole Church*, that the Gates of " Hell ſhall not prevail againſt this *whole* " *Church* ; --- therefore the Church of *Rome* " is infallible."

I believe it will be difficult to find any Connexion here between the Antecedent and Conſequent, or the Premiſſes and Concluſion.

This were enough to expoſe the Weakneſs

neſs and Fallacy of this boaſted Argument; but as this Text is the Sheet Anchor of the *Romiſh* Church, and as one of theſe Gentlemen has acknowledged, that "it is the clear-"eſt and ſtrongeſt Proof of his infallible "Church," if upon Enquiry it ſhould be found it can bear another, more natural, and leſs forced Meaning, than that they would ſtrain it to, the Superſtructure they would raiſe upon it will be in tottering Circumſtances; and however their Church may be built upon a Rock, their Infallibility will be found eſtabliſhed upon the Sand only.

I will therefore (with God's Aſſiſtance) conſider this Text carefully, and at proper Length: And tho' it will take more Time here, yet it will ſave as much afterwards, and leſſen the Reader's Trouble, when I come to examine the other Texts brought to the ſame Purpoſe.

To proceed the more diſtinctly in this Matter, I will give the Reaſons, 1*ſt*, Why we reject the Popiſh Comment on this Text. And 2*dly*, Why we prefer another.

§ I. 1*ſt*, If this Promiſe is underſtood in the *Romiſh* Senſe, either it will prove too much, or prove nothing; becauſe, if it entails Infallibility on their Church, ſo muſt it likewiſe Impeccability; for the Promiſe

is, to ſecure the Church againſt the Prevalency of the Gates of Hell, but theſe Gates may prevail as certainly, and do prevail as frequently, by Errors in Practice, as in Faith; and therefore this Promiſe muſt ſecure the Church of *Rome* againſt damnable Sins, or it doth not ſecure her againſt damnable Errors: The former of theſe ſhe has not as yet contended for, and therefore the latter we cannot yield her.

2*dly*, Whatever Infallibility is here promiſed to St. *Peter*, is, in other Places of the Goſpel promiſed equally to all the Apoſtles. If the Gates of Hell were not to prevail againſt St. *Peter*, the Comforter was promiſed to "guide the reſt of the Apoſtles "into all Truth, *and to be with them unto* "*the End of the World.*"---The ſame Power of the Keys which was promiſed to St. *Peter*, is actually given to all the Apoſtles;---and if St. *Peter* is here called a Rock, ſo are the reſt of the Apoſtles called Foundations and Pillars, (all which may be ſeen in the Scriptures referred to at the Foot of this Page) and where is the great Odds?

Certainly the Promiſes will conclude as ſtrong for the Infallibility of all the Apoſtles, and their Succeſſors, as for that of St. *Peter* and

St. John, xvi. 13. St. Matth. xxviii. 19. & xviii. 18. St. John, xx. 22, 23. Epheſ. ii. 20. Gal. ii. 9.

and his ; and consequently every Church, planted by the Apostles, or their Successors, has as good Pretensions to Infallibility as the Church of *Rome* ; which is a Favour she will by no Means allow them.

If it be said, that the other Apostles were indeed infallible themselves, but their Infallibility was not to descend to their Successors. It is answered, No more was St. *Peter*'s entailed upon his ; or if it were, Why should it go to his Successor at *Rome*, and not remain with his Successor at *Antioch*? who was confessedly (in this Case) the Son of the first Marriage; the Right of the First-born was his.

But the Truth of the Matter is, that this Text now under Consideration, speaks not one Syllable more of transmitting St. *Peter*'s Infallibility to his Successors, than the other Texts, above referred to, do of transmitting the Infallibility of the other Apostles to theirs ; and so it follows, (by unavoidable Consequence) either that St. *Peter*'s Successor is fallible, or that the Successors of all the Apostles are as infallible as he ; and if they be, then with what Confidence can the Church of *Rome* pretend to condemn and anathematize any Church that differs from her, since they are all upon a Level, for Infallibility and Authority too ?

To avoid the Force of this, the two Authors I have now under my Eye would fain perſuade us, that the *Roman* Church is the whole Catholick Church, ſo as there is no other Church now upon Earth can pretend to be Apoſtolical, none which can prove her Succeſſion, or derive her Original from any of the Apoſtles, as the Church of *Rome* does hers from St. *Peter*.

But how ſhould this happen? It muſt be allowed, that the other Apoſtles planted Churches; St. *John* in *Aſia*, St. *Peter* among the *Jews*, and St. *Paul* (every where) among the Gentiles, *&c.* --- Now, all theſe Churches had an equal Claim to the Promiſes with that of *Rome*, whatever theſe Promiſes contain; and if they do contain an Aſſurance of Infallibility, or Perpetuity, how could they fail altogether, or ceaſe to be Apoſtolical? But ſince we find many of them have actually erred and failed, it appears that no particular Church muſt appropriate the Promiſe, or can have a ſingular Title to it, excluſive of all the reſt; conſequently, that it is at leaſt poſſible that the Church of *Rome* may err and fail, as ſeveral other Apoſtolical Churches have done; and if this Poſſibility remain, ſhe is not infallible. For,

3*dly*, Let it be ſuppoſed, that Infallibility

is promiſed in this Text, yet the Promiſe is made to the *whole Church*, *i. e.* to all that was to be built upon the Rock, which Chriſt calls his Church. Now, the Promiſe being thus made to the *whole Church*, it muſt belong to all the Parts alike, of which this *Whole* is made up ; by which Means all the Biſhops and Churches in the World muſt come in for a Share of this Infallibility with the Church and Biſhop of *Rome* ; and if this is the Caſe, the Church of *Rome* appears to be a very bad Neighbour ; for by what Warrant has ſhe made a Monopoly of it, and determined that to be her Property which was intended to have been common?

Had the *Roman* Church let Things ſtand upon their proper Bottom, had ſhe paid due Regard to the Sentiments of the univerſal Church of Chriſt, had ſhe taken for her Rule the Word of God, as underſtood, interpreted, and applied, by the conſtant and agreeing Teſtimony and Practice of the Church, in all Places, and all Ages, eſpecially the early ones, which were neareſt to the Fountain-head, and were inſtructed by the Apoſtles, and their immediate Succeſſors, --- we ſhould have had no Difference with her ; for we adhere to the known and approved Rule of *Vincentius Lyrinenſis*, " That which has obtained in all Places, a-

" mong

" mong all Churches, and at all Times, is " truly Catholick." To this Rule we ſubmit, and by it we are content to have the Cauſe tried and decided in all Matters of Diſpute betwixt them and us: But the Church of *Rome* would not venture this; ſhe ſaw plainly her new Doctrines would not ſtand this Teſt, nor ſquare with this Rule, and therefore deviſed this Pretence of Infallibility, and paramount Authority, as a more proper Defence for them.

4*thly*, What if for this once I ſhould allow, (what ſome Popiſh Writers have affirmed, and others, particularly theſe two Gentlemen, have ſtrongly inſinuated) that the *Rock* mentioned in this Text was not Chriſt himſelf, nor St. *Peter*'s Confeſſion, but his Perſon; yet even this would not avail, to carry their Cauſe.

For, according to this Hypotheſis, the Churches of *Jeruſalem*, *Antioch*, *Crete*, and *Corinth*, the ſeven Churches of *Aſia*, and (to uſe St. *Paul*'s Expreſſion) all the Churches, muſt have been built upon St. *Peter*'s Perſon, as well as that of *Rome*; and ſince this Infallibility was equally promiſed to all Parts of the Church built upon this Rock, it muſt follow of Courſe, either that each of theſe Churches was infallible, or that the

the Church of *Rome* is as fallible as they were.

It cannot be denied, that the Goſpel was preached, and a Church formed and eſtabliſhed at *Jeruſalem*, at *Antioch*, and other Places, before there was any at *Rome*. Now, either theſe Churches were built upon this Rock, or they were not: If not, then all the Apoſtles of theſe Churches, not excepting St. *Peter* himſelf, who was Biſhop of *Antioch*, were much to blame, for impoſing a groundleſs Inſtitution upon their Converts, I mean forming them into Churches, not founded upon the Rock: But if they were, what imaginable Reaſon can be aſſigned, why the Gates of Hell ſhould have prevailed againſt thoſe ancient Churches, (eſpecially that of *Jeruſalem*, the Mother-Church of Chriſtians) and yet can never prevail againſt the Church of *Rome*; ſince they were all built upon the ſame Rock, and the Promiſes (whatever they were) were equally made to all?

It will be difficult to find a good Reaſon for this Preference, this diſtinguiſhing Preeminence claimed by *Rome*; the natural Inference, the neceſſary Concluſion, rather is, that ſince theſe Churches have erred and failed, it is (at leaſt) poſſible, that the Church of *Rome* may err and fail, as they have

done, ſince ſhe is built upon no other Rock, nor can pretend to any ſtronger Promiſe, or higher Privilege, than they might.

Having thus laid before the Reader ſome of the Difficulties and Abſurdities inſeparable from the Popiſh Comment on this Text, which muſt occur to any one that conſiders it with Attention and Candour, and without the Bias which Education or Intereſt, Pride, or other Paſſion, lay upon the Mind, I proceed to offer another and better Way of underſtanding it, more reconcileable to Truth and common Senſe, and ſuch as may not ſet our bleſſed Lord's Promiſe in any Contradiction to his Providence.

§ II. In order to form a right Judgment of the Nature and Extent of this Promiſe, it will be neceſſary to explain the Terms in which it is wrapt up, *viz.* What is meant by this *Rock*: What by the *Church* built upon that Rock: And what by the *Gates of Hell's not prevailing* againſt that Church.

1*ſt*, As to the *Rock*, a Number of Writers on the Popiſh Side have affirmed it to be meant of St. *Peter* himſelf; and of this Mind the Author of the Manuſcript ſeems to be; for he reads the Text thus, "Thou "art *Peter*, (that is a *Rock*) and upon this "Rock, *&c.*" *Bellarmine* has told us, that this

this was the current Opinion amongſt the Fathers; the contrary whereof might be made appear from a great Number of Teſtimonies; but to ſave Labour and Time, I ſhall mention but a few, but ſuch as, being deciſive in the Caſe, will be ſufficient to confute the Cardinal.

St. *Auguſtine* ſays expreſly, that "*Peter* "himſelf was built upon that Rock, and "how then could he be that Rock?" His Reaſoning is ſo ſtrong, that I ſhall tranſcribe his Paragraph, after deſiring the Reader would ſatisfy himſelf as to the Juſtneſs of my Tranſlation, by looking to the Place referred to at the Foot of this Page[a].

"The Church (ſays he) in this Age is "ſhaken with many Temptations, (as with "Rains, Floods, and Tempeſts) but does "not fall, becauſe ſhe is founded upon a "*Rock*; from whence alſo *Peter* received "his Name; for the Rock is not named "from *Peter*, but *Peter* from the Rock, "even as Chriſt does not derive his Name "from Chriſtians, but Chriſtians from "Chriſt; therefore ſaith the Lord, Upon "this Rock I will build my Church, be-"cauſe *Peter* had ſaid, Thou art Chriſt, "the Son of the living God.---Upon this

 "Rock

[a] *D. Auguſtin. tract. ult. i. e.* 124. *in evang. Joan. tom.* 9. *col.* 572. *Edit. Baſil.*

" Rock therefore, (ſays Chriſt) which thou
" haſt confeſſed, will I build my Church;
" for the *Rock* was Chriſt, upon which *Pe-*
" *ter* himſelf was built; for *another Foun-*
" *dation can no Man lay, than that which is*
" *laid, which is Chriſt Jeſus.*"

And in another Place of his Works [b], the ſame St. *Auguſtine* has ſaid ſomething full home to the ſame Purpoſe, which I ſhall alſo tranſcribe, with the ſame ſtrict Regard to his Meaning, tho' I cannot pretend to retain his Elegancies. --- " Therefore (ſaith
" Chriſt) thou art *Peter*, and upon this
" Rock which thou haſt confeſſed, this
" Rock which thou haſt known, ſaying,
" *thou art Chriſt, the Son of the living God,*
" will I build my Church. Upon *me* will
" I build thee, and not *me* upon thee; for
" Men inclining to be built upon Men, ſaid,
" I am of *Apollo*, I of *Paul*, and I of
" *Cephas*, the ſame is *Peter*; but others,
" who would not be built upon *Peter*, but
" upon the Rock, ſaid, I am of Chriſt,
" 1 *Cor.* iii. 12. But the Apoſtle *Paul*,
" when he underſtood that he was prefer-
" red, and Chriſt deſpiſed, ſaith, *Is Chriſt*
" *divided? Was* Paul *crucified for you? Or*
" *were ye baptized in the Name of* Paul?
" As

[b] *D. Auguſtin. de verbis Domini, Serm.* 13. *tam.* 10. *fol.* 58.

" As therefore not in *Paul*'s, ſo neither in " *Peter*'s, but in the Name of Chriſt; --- " that *Peter* might be built upon the Rock, " and not the Rock upon *Peter*.

Pope *Gregory* I. ſays, [c] " That when in " ſacred Stile the Rock is ſpoken of in the " ſingular Number, who other than Chriſt " is to be underſtood?" *Theophylact* ſays indeed, " Chriſt greatly rewarded St. *Peter*, " by building his Church upon him;" but immediately after explains himſelf, " that " he meant his Confeſſion, not his Per- " ſon [d]." And Pope *Adrian* ſays, " that " Chriſt built his Church upon the Rock " which *Peter* had confeſſed [e]."

It might be made evident, by many more Citations from the Fathers, that they were far from being on the Popiſh Side in this Queſtion; tho' if it ſhould be ſuppoſed they had been, I would believe St. *Paul* againſt them all, who ſays expreſly [f] (and is above cited for that Purpoſe by St. *Auguſtine*) that " another Foundation can no " Man lay, than that which is laid, which " is Chriſt Jeſus." But the few Teſtimonies above referred to will reſcue them from that

[c] *Greg. moral. in Job. Lib.* 31. *c.* 24. *& lib.* 28. *c.* 9.
[d] *Theophyl. in Matth. cap.* 16.
[e] *Epiſt. ad epiſcopos Galliciæ & Hiſpaniæ.*
[f] 1 Cor. iii. 11.

that Imputation, and warrand me to conclude, that the Rock ſpoken of in this Text, is Chriſt himſelf, as confeſſed by St. *Peter*, in that noble Declaration of his Faith, (which Fleſh and Blood had not revealed to him) that he "was Chriſt, the Son of the "living God."

Nor is it unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that Chriſt meant himſelf, when he ſaid *this Rock*; for why might he not point to himſelf in pronouncing theſe Words, as he ſeems to have done upon another like Occaſion, ſaying to the *Jews*, "Deſtroy this Temple, "and in three Days I will raiſe it up[g]." The *Jews* took this in a Popiſh Senſe, for the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, which he had juſt before been ſpeaking of, but the Evangeliſt ſays, "he meant the Temple of his "Body."

2*dly*, The next Thing to be enquired into is, What we are to underſtand by the *Church* promiſed to be built upon this *Rock*. For this I hope I may refer back to the preceeding Chapter, where I obſerved, that the Term *Church* being of various and doubtful Signification, it is of great Conſequence to fix a right Notion of it, that we may have no Handle to ſuſpect the Truth of our

[g] St. John, ii. 19, 21.

our bleſſed Lord, nor to bring the punctual Performance of his Promiſe into queſtion, by a wrong Application of it.

The original Word which we render *Church*, properly ſignifies, "a Multitude "called out, or called together."

Sometimes this Word is put to ſignify them only who are ſevered or called out from the reſt of the World by the Work of Grace, by being made Partakers of the heavenly Calling, whereby they are made Heirs of Salvation, which is called the *inviſible Church*, becauſe we cannot diſtinctly diſcern and diſtinguiſh them from others who are not of this happy Number. Againſt theſe the Gates of Hell do not prevail indeed; but the Promiſe does not ſeem peculiar to them only.

Sometimes again the Church ſignifies that Company of Men who live in the outward Profeſſion of the Truth, and acknowledge the Name and Goſpel of Chriſt, in any Part of the World. In the firſt Senſe it implies "only the *Iſrael* of God[h];" but in the ſecond, it comprehends "all them that are of "*Iſrael*." Now, their Doctrine and Worſhip being open and viſible, ſuch as they may be taken Notice of, and diſtinguiſhed by,

[h] Rom. ix. 6.

by, they are on that Account called the *visible Church*, which, becauſe it is not, like the *Jewiſh* Church, confined to any one Country, or any determined Place, is alſo called the *Catholick* or *Univerſal Church*, which is a homogeneal Body, made up of ſimilar Parts, an Aggregate of all the particular Churches, with their particular Biſhops and Paſtors, in the whole World.

Sometimes indeed the *particular Churches*, the ſeveral Parts of which this great Body is compoſed, are called by this Name too, ſuch as, the Church of *Jeruſalem*, of *Rome*, *Corinth*, *Epheſus*, *&c.* Thus St. *Paul* mentions the "Care of all the Churches," and ſays, "he had ordained ſo in all Churches[i]."

Now, in this laſt Senſe the Promiſe is not, nor can be meant, becauſe thoſe Churches mentioned in Scripture, having ſome of them revolted from the Doctrine and Worſhip of Chriſt, and being over-run with Errors and Hereſies, deſtructive of the firſt and fundamental Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, it is evident that the Gates of Hell have actually prevailed againſt theſe; and what has been their dreadful Fate, may likewiſe happen to any other particular Church, which has no more

[i] 1 Cor. vii. 17.

more Aſſurance of Infallibility, or Indefectibility than theſe had.

So that the *Univerſal Church* appears plainly to be the Society concerned in this Promiſe; and ſo long as the Chriſtian Religion does not abſolutely diſappear, ſo long as there are any where Men who continue to hold all the neceſſary and eſſential Points implied in that Confeſſion of St. *Peter*'s Faith, which Fleſh and Blood had not revealed to him; ſo long as there remains upon the Face of the Earth, a Society of Chriſtians, acknowledging and maintaining, (againſt Heathens, *Jews*, *Mahometans*, *Arians*, *Socinians*, Deiſts, Free-thinkers, Quakers, all the Adverſaries of this holy Faith) "that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the Fleſh, "and that he is the Son of the living God;" ſo long the Promiſe is ſtill made good; the Candle is not put out, tho' the Candleſtick may be removed from ſome particular and viſible Churches, and tranſlated from one Country or Province into another.

Having thus ſeen to whom this Promiſe belongs, it remains to eſtabliſh a right Notion of the Promiſe itſelf. There is no Room to doubt but our bleſſed Saviour will perform whatever he has promiſed; but if we miſtake his Words or Meaning, and imagine he has promiſed more than he really

has done, we injure him, and impoſe upon ourſelves, by expecting more than he meant to give; for the Promiſes of our Lord being the only Foundation of Certainty we have to depend upon for the Continuance of his Church, as he no doubt fulfils them, ſo it becomes us to interpret them in ſuch Way and Manner, as that we may know they are fulfilled, and the World may be convinced he keeps his Word. In order to this, it is neceſſary to enquire, in the

3d Place, What is meant by the *Gates of Hell not prevailing againſt this Church.* ---- Learned Men have underſtood this different Ways, and yet their ſeveral Interpretations of this Promiſe are agreeable to Truth, to the Nature of the Promiſe, and to the Occaſion of making it; ſo that tho' they differ, they do not neceſſarily deſtroy each other.

Some by the Word ᾅδης, which is here tranſlated *Hell*, underſtand no more than the State of Souls departed, or that which is elſewhere called "the Gates of the "Grave[r]." And then the Import of the Promiſe will amount to this much, that altho' Chriſt has not ſo vanquiſhed Death, as to ſet his Followers out of a Condition of dying, yet Death ſhall not obtain a final and ab-

[r] Iſa. xxxviii. 10.

abſolute Conqueſt over them that die in the Lord, in regard that they who have believed and obeyed this Chriſt, the Son of the living God, ſhall one Day riſe again to Glory and Immortality; and thus the Gates of *Hell* or *Death* ſhall not prevail againſt this Church, becauſe the Members, of which this great Body is compoſed, ſhall not continue dead for ever, but revive a ſecond Time to a better Life, and triumph over this laſt great Enemy of Mankind.

And indeed if we conſider the Occaſion of making this Promiſe, and the Perſons to whom it was made, this Interpretation will appear not unreaſonable.

The Occaſion of making it, was that noble Confeſſion of the Divinity of Chriſt; a Truth accompanied with very great Danger in thoſe Days.---The Perſons to whom it was made were firſt the Apoſtles, and not to them only, but all thoſe who, to the End of the World, ſhould believe the ſame Truth, and make the ſame Confeſſion.

As for the *Apoſtles*, (beſides the common Fate of Mortality) they were to expoſe themſelves (in the Diſcharge of their Office) to the certain Peril of their Lives; and after they had preached and propagated this Truth, which St. *Peter* (in Name of them all) here confeſſed, they were to ſeal

their Teſtimony with their warmeſt Blood. Now, what could more conduce to eſtabliſh their Minds in this hazardous Undertaking, than the Aſſurance of a future State? which was therefore very ſeaſonably given them in this Promiſe, that the *Gates of Hell*, that is, of *Death*, ſhould not finally prevail againſt them.

And as for other *Chriſtians*, who ſhall profeſs this Faith to the End of the World, tho' perhaps they may not be in ſuch imminent Danger from open Perſecutors, yet they are obliged to take up the Croſs too, to be in a conſtant Readineſs to run the ſame Hazards, and endure the ſame Hardſhips over again, to declare War againſt ghoſtly Enemies, to believe and obey all the neceſſary Doctrines and Duties couched in this ſingle Propoſition, that "Jeſus is the Chriſt, the "Son of the living God;" ſome of which are much againſt the Grain of Fleſh and Blood. In ſhort, there can be no Truce between our carnal Appetites, and the Severities of a Chriſtian Converſation; and therefore it muſt be confeſs'd, that Men could hardly be perſuaded to a Conduct ſo reſerved, and full of Auſterity, was there not a Reverſion hereafter, ſo very much to be preferred to any preſent Enjoyment or Gratification here, that the mere Expect-

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ance of this makes any Thing we can do or ſuffer, for ſecuring it to ourſelves, highly reaſonable.

Now, what can contribute more to ſoften theſe Rigidities, and ſweeten thoſe ſelf-denying Duties, which human Nature counts ſo harſh, and hard of Digeſtion, than this Promiſe of our bleſſed Lord, (underſtood in this Senſe) whereby we are ſatisfied, that the Gates of Hell, *i. e.* of Death or the Grave, ſhall not finally prevail againſt us; that is to ſay, that we dy not for ever, only like Plants in the Winter, loſe our Verdure for a while, and diſappear, yet ſo, that the Principle of Life ſtill remains, tho' the Signs and outward Effects of it be withdrawn, and we ſhall bud and flouriſh again, more vigorous and beautiful than before, in never fading Glories, and eternal Spring.

Others again take theſe Words in the more vulgar and common Acceptation, and by *Hell* underſtand the Place of infernal Torments; and becauſe the Gates of Cities were ordinarily fortified Places, and that among the *Jews* they were the Places of Judicature, where their Magiſtrates ſat, for the Diſtribution of Juſtice, and conſulting about the publick Good; therefore, by *Gates*, they underſtand *Strength* and *Policy*; and then the Senſe of the Promiſe will

come

come to this much, That notwithſtanding the Devil, and his Inſtruments, wicked Men, and damned Spirits are irreconcileable Enemies to the Progreſs of the Chriſtian Faith, and do all they can to obſtruct the Salvation of Mens Souls, yet all in vain; Chriſtianity ſhall ſtand and flouriſh, in Spite of them, and all their Power and Subtilty ſhall not be able to accompliſh the impious Deſign of quite defeating and overthrowing it.

Now, this Promiſe may be applied two Ways, either to *private Chriſtians* in their ſingle Capacity, or to the *whole Body* of them together united, which makes the *Catholick Church.*

There have been ſome (Men of no ſmall Character) who have applied it to the *Church* in a *diſtributive* Senſe, ſo as every private Chriſtian may take it to himſelf; and then by the Gates of Hell not prevailing againſt Believers, is intended, not an abſolute Freedom and Immunity from Temptation, or Sin either, but that Sin, or Temptation, ſhall not be the final Ruin of thoſe who ſtedfaſtly, in Profeſſion and Practice, adhere to this Truth, that "Jeſus Chriſt is "the Son of the living God."

But the Generality underſtand it of the Church *collective*, that is, Chriſtians, not

in

in their ſingle and private Capacities, but united into one Body, under Chriſt their Head; and then the Promiſe will amount to this much, That notwithſtanding the Devil may endeavour, by Perſecution, to batter down this Building upon the Rock, or by Idolatry, or Hereſy, to ſap and undermine it, yet theſe Attempts ſhall be unſucceſsful, in ſo far as there ſhall always be ſome ſo orthodox as to be fully perſuaded of, and ſo conſtant as to profeſs, the great and neceſſary Truths of the Chriſtian Religion; and theſe Chriſtians, thus perſuaded, and thus profeſſing, be they more or fewer, proſperous or perſecuted, are the Church, in this Pomiſe, againſt which the Gates of Hell never did, nor ever ſhall, prevail, becauſe he who made this Promiſe will always take Care, that there ſhall never, to the World's End, be wanting a Society of Men, confeſſing with St. *Peter*, " that Jeſus is the Chriſt, " the Son of the living God."

Theſe are all the reaſonable Conſtructions which this Text can well bear, the utmoſt Length to which this Promiſe will ſtretch, without Violence; but for the Infallibility of any particular Man, or Church, it is plainly more than what our bleſſed Lord meant to promiſe, and conſequently more than

than we have any Reaſon to expect or depend upon.

And tho' theſe Opinions of learned Men, about the Meaning and Extent of this Promiſe, do differ, yet they do not contradict or deſtroy one another; each of them may be, and probably is true, being all naturally deducible from the Promiſe itſelf, the Perſons to whom it was made, and the Occaſion of making it.

St. *Ambroſe* ſeems to have underſtood it in this Way, and in both theſe Senſes his Words will ſerve for an Abridgment and Atteſtation of what is here advanced on this Subject: [s] "Faith (ſays he) is the Foun-
"dation of the Church, for it is not of
"the Perſon of St. *Peter*, but his Faith,
"that it is ſaid, that the Gates of Death
"ſhall not prevail againſt it: But Confeſ-
"ſion overcomes Hell; and this Confeſſion
"does not exclude one Hereſy only; for
"when the Church (like a good Ship) is
"toſſed with many Waves, yet againſt all
"Hereſies the Foundation of the Church
"ought to ſtand firm. The Time would
"ſooner fail me than the Names of Here-
"ticks, and diverſe Sects, yet in Spite of
"them all, this is the *common Faith*, that
"*Chriſt*

[s] *D. Ambroſ. lib. de incarn. Domin. myſterio.* c. 5. tom. 2. p. 224. Edit. Baſileæ.

" *Chriſt is the Son of God, co-eternal with*
" *the Father, and born of a Virgin.*

Now, from this Promiſe, thus explained, and as it appears to have been underſtood by St. *Ambroſe*, and other learned Men, Ancients, as well as Moderns, it cannot be inferred, either;

1*ſt*, That the Church of Chriſt ſhall always continue in *outward Peace* and *Splendor*. We know that after our Lord's Reſurrection, it was all contained in one ſingle Room, where the Diſciples were aſſembled privately for Fear of the *Jews*; and during the primitive Perſecutions, it was to be found only in Deſarts and Mountains, Holes and Caves of the Earth, among ſuch Perſons, as (to avoid the Fury of their Enemies) ſerved God, not in ſplendid Temples and Synagogues, with all the external Pomp of Worſhip, but in ſuch Manner and Places, as the Wiſdom of the Serpent, join'd with the Innocence of the Dove, put them upon taking Shelter in. And ſome Time after theſe Perſecutions ceaſed, *Arianiſm* prevailed ſo far, that it became proverbial, " One *A-*
" *thanaſius* againſt the whole World; and
" the whole World againſt *Athanaſius*."

And therefore, the true Church is not to be ſought, nor found out, only by ſuch fallible Marks, and Characters, as, Num-

bers, Splendor, viſible Succeſſion of Paſtors in the ſame Place, Countenance of human and ſecular Authority, Multitude of Profeſſors, or Freedom of Worſhip: No, theſe were but the thin Pretences of Old *Babylon*, "That ſhe was a Lady for ever, "and ſaid in her Heart, I am, and none "elſe beſides me, *&c.* [a]." And of the Church of *Laodicea*, which ſaid, "I am "rich, and increaſed with Goods, and "have need of nothing." When the Spirit of God (who beholds the Proud afar off) judged otherwiſe of her Caſe, pronouncing her "to be wretched, and miſerable, and "poor, and blind, and naked, and that ſhe "knew it not [b].

But the certain *Marks* whereby to diſcover and diſtinguiſh the *true Church*, is not by the Boldneſs of her Pretenſions, but by the Truth of her Doctrines, the Sincerity of her Members, and their ſtedfaſt Adherence to the ſaving Truths of the Goſpel; and eſpecially to this one, which is the Foundation of all the reſt, that "Jeſus is "the Chriſt, the Son of the living God."

2*dly*, Neither can it be inferred from hence, that the Church of God cannot err in any Thing. For as Men may be ſaved,

[a] Iſa. xlvii. 7. 8.
[b] Rev. iii. 17.

ved, though they be not abſolutely void of all Sins; and as a Man may exiſt, though he be not entirely free from Weakneſs, Defects and Diſeaſes, which may for a Time interrupt his Health and Vigour; ſo the Church may continue a true Church, though it be not totally and abſolutely exempted from all Error.

For if nothing leſs than an abſolute Immunity from Error, an Impoſſibility of miſtaking, is neceſſary to the Being of a Church, it will be very diſputable, whether Chriſt ever had a true Church upon Earth, ſince abſolute Perfection is not to be attained on this Side of Heaven.

How long were the Apoſtles the Repreſentatives of the true Church, before they had right Apprehenſions of Chriſt's ſpiritual Kingdom, or had quitted their old vain Expectation of a conquering temporal Meſſiah, to reſtore the Kingdom to *Iſrael?* How long was it, e'er St. *Peter* was perſuaded, that the Goſpel ſhould be preached to the Gentiles [c]? How many in St. *Paul*'s Days built Hay and Stubble upon the Foundation [d]? and yet they were of the Church, ſo long as they kept the Foundation. Was there any of the primitive Churches planted by the Apoſtles themſelves, and under their

[c] Acts i. and x. [d] 1 Cor. iii. 12.

own Direction, abſolutely free from Errors, and Corruptions? Does not the Spirit of God by St. *John* reprove ſeveral Errors in the Churches of *Aſia* [c]? And St. *Paul* by the ſame Spirit reproves ſeveral things amiſs in the Churches of *Greece*, and others to whom he wrote, that of *Rome* not excepted: And yet they were truly Parts and Members of the Catholick Church of Chriſt, notwithſtanding theſe Faults and Errors, becauſe they all agreed in the main, the eſſential Doctrines of Chriſtianity.

All Men, as ſuch, are ſubject to Miſtakes, but all Miſtakes do not overthrow the Being of a Church: And though it ſhould be granted that no Society of Men did ever ſerve God in perfect Purity; yet ſo long as their Corruptions did not actually overturn the main Points of Faith, ſo long as they held faſt the Form of ſound Words, and kept to the Foundation, ſuch Errors and Corruptions in Matters of leſſer Moment, are not inconſiſtent with this Promiſe; for the Gates of Hell have not prevailed, till Error rides triumphant, and draws all Men off from the Belief and Confeſſion that "Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of the living "God."

This was plainly the Caſe of the Church of

[c] Rev. ii. and iii. &c.

of *Rome*, at the Time of our *Reformation*: The Gates of Hell had not ſo far prevailed againſt her, as to deny the Divinity of the Son of God; ſhe therefore continued a viſible Church, becauſe ſhe held the Foundation, though "ſhe had built Wood, "Hay and Stubble upon it," ſuch as Tranſubſtantiation, Invocation of Saints and Angels, Mutilation of the Sacrament, *&c.* with Infallibility and Supremacy, the common Vouchers for all.

We therefore, as a national Church, by the Sanction of Catholick Authority, found it needful to reform from her Errors and Corruptions in Faith, Worſhip and Polity, that is, to purge off her Chaff, and to burn up her "Wood, Hay and Stubble," but ſo as to keep the Foundation ſafe and ſound.

We did not therefore ſeparate our ſelves from her as a *viſible Church*, but as *corrupted*; that is, we gave up nothing that was worth keeping, or could be kept with Truth and a good Conſcience, nothing but the Corruptions and Innovations which ſhe had ſuperinduced into the Doctrine and Practice of the Catholick Church: As is evident from this, That let their Superſtructures, (thoſe Things, I mean, which were unknown to the Apoſtles and primitive Church) be laid

laid aſide, and not impoſed as Terms of Communion, and we will then communicate with her, with greater Joy and Forwardneſs than ever our Anceſtors ſeparated from her.

But, until that is done, the Guilt of Schiſm lies at her Door, for forcing us out of her Communion, by impoſing unjuſtifiable Terms of it; and we muſt be allowed not to partake in other Mens Sins, (when we ſee them) leſt we ſhare in their Danger too. And though ſome of their Corruptions may perhaps be of a pretty old ſtanding, (though none of them ſo old as they pretend;) yet if they be Innovations and Errors, (as has many a Time been proved) it can never be too late to reform them, becauſe no Preſcription can paſs againſt Truth.

This Digreſſion (if it is one) will help to diſcover the Fallacy of that trifling Witticiſm, ſo common in the Mouths of *Roman* Catholicks, when they mean to miſlead our People into their Communion, "Where "was your Church before *Luther?*" That is, they would have us ſhew, that our Church has been ſince the Apoſtles Days, a Society void of Error; that this Society has always been viſible in the ſame Shape it is now, and that it has always been diſtinct

from

from theirs, and proteſting againſt their Innovations and Corruptions.--The firſt whereof is not neceſſary, the ſecond not reaſonable, and the third not poſſible.

1*ſt*, It is not neceſſary, either to the Being or Viſibility of a Church, that ſhe be abſolutely free from all Errors, no more than to the Exiſtence of a Man, that he have no Blemiſh or Defect: For it is ſhewed above, that this does not come within the Compaſs of our Saviour's Promiſe to his Church, ſince the Gates of Hell do not finally prevail by every Error, (any more than by every Sin or Failing) but only by ſuch as affect and ſap the very Foundations.

2*dly*, It is unreaſonable to bid us ſhew, that our Church has always appeared in the ſame Shape, when it is ſo evident, that their own Church has not always done ſo. The Odds between the ancient Church of *Rome* and the preſent, is juſt as great, as that between the three ancient Creeds (which we ſtill retain) and the Creed of Pope *Pius* IV. which is ſwollen one half bigger, and is now the Standart of their Religion: So that if the primitive Church of *Rome* was to viſit this Earth once more, ſhe would not own the modern Church of *Rome* to be the ſame in all Matters of Faith and Practice, as when ſhe left it; but their new ſuperinduced Doctrines

ctrines (whereof Infallibility is one) would appear as ſtrange and unknown to her, as their Faces. And,

3*dly*, To bid us ſhew, that our Church has always been diſtinct from theirs, and proteſted againſt their Errors, is very trifling. It has often been ſhewed, that our Church was diſtinct and independent of theirs at firſt, and ſo continued for many Hundreds of Years, till at laſt (by Ways and Means) they brought our Fathers to ſubmit to their Encroachments, though with great Reluctancy. Their Innovations were not the Growth of one Age, but came up (like the Tares among the Wheat) by leiſurely and ſecret Advances; ſo that New *Rome* was not built in one Day, any more than the Old. And would they have us to ſeparate from their Communion without great Cauſe, that is, to proteſt againſt their Errors, before ever they were broached, maintained and declared to be theirs, by enjoining the Belief and Practice of them, as Terms of Communion, and under the Penalty of a Curſe?

We had indeed the Unhappineſs to be too long blended with them, but that could not run a Preſcription againſt Truth, nor make it any Fault in us to reform from their Errors, when it was in our Power, any more

more than it was in *Nehemiah* and *Zorobabel* to rebuild their Temple, and make the new one as like the old as poſſible; or in *Hezekiah* and *Joſiah* to reform the *Jewiſh* Church, (according to Scripture Rule) and reſtore their Religion to its ancient Purity; or in the ancient Fathers, to reſtore the Catholick Doctrine, when *Arianiſm* gave Way; or in our Anceſtors at the Reſtoration of our King in 1660, to reſtore the Church to her former Rights and Privileges, over-run by the Sectaries in the Time of that great Rebellion.

This Quibble of theirs did not deſerve ſo much Notice, but I was willing to conſider it at length, as it has been apt to puzzle the Ignorant, though a ſhorter Anſwer to it might have been made, and would have been ſufficient, that is, by aſking another Queſtion; "Sup- "poſe a Man to have enjoyed a State of "good Health for many Years; that in the "Courſe of Time, this Man (turning ir- "regular, and neglecting his wonted La- "bour) catches a Scurvy, which increaſes "by Degrees to the over-running and diſfi- "guring his whole Body, and in the Event "brings a Fever, a Roving and Delirium.— "But at laſt, by the good Providence of "God, on the Care of the Phyſician, and

" the Uſe of Medicines, Diet and Regimen, " he recovers his former Health, Vigour " and Looks. --- Pray, where was the Man " all the long Time of his Illneſs?" When they give a direct ſatisfying Anſwer to this, we ſhall hear no more of their enſnaring Query.

I am afraid, it will be thought I have ſpent too much Time on this Argument; but the anſwering fully, ſolidly and diſtinctly this ſingle Paragraph of the Author of the Manuſcript, was (in effect) to anſwer his whole Paper. Indeed when it is conſidered, that this Promiſe to St. *Peter*, is looked upon by the *Romiſh* Church, as it were her *Magna Charta*, her Charter of Erection, or Claim of Right; and that her Miſſionaries ſquander away ſo much Rhetorick, to make it ſpeak forth Infallibility; it could not be amiſs to beſtow ſome Time, to ſet it in a true Light, and the rather, that I ſhall be ſhorter on his other Texts.

I ſhall conclude this Section, when I have ſpoken a few Words to my old Acquaintance, the Author of the *Shorteſt Way*, *&c.* I obſerved in the Beginning of this Chapter, that this modeſt Author has aſſured us, that this Text, which I have been conſidering, " is the cleareſt and ſtrongeſt Proof " of an infallible Church." What Ground

he

he had for his Confidence, we have now ſeen; but I muſt not overlook the Reaſon he gives for it, " this Promiſe (ſays he) is " abſolute and unconditional, for there is " no Condition either expreſſed or implied " in the whole Text."

Well ſaid, and ſtrongly affirmed: But may there not be a Condition tacitly implied, though there be none expreſſed? If this Gentleman would look back to the Promiſe of an everlaſting Prieſthood made to *Eli* and his Family, it ſeems as ſtrong, expreſs, abſolute and unconditional as this one to St. *Peter*, (1 *Sam.* ii. 30.) " I ſaid " indeed, ſaith the Lord God of *Iſrael*, " that thy Houſe, and the Houſe of thy " Father ſhould walk before me for ever." Here is no Condition either expreſſed or hinted at in the whole Promiſe; and yet, whoever conſiders what happened afterwards to that unfortunate Houſe, muſt neceſſarily ſuppoſe a Condition, which was not expreſſed, but is evidently to be underſtood from what follows, " but now the Lord " ſaith, Be it far from me; for them that " honour me, I will honour, and they that " deſpiſe me, ſhall be lightly eſteemed."

Perhaps it may be replied to this, " that " the Promiſes under the Law, were indeed " conditional, but theſe under the Goſpel

" are abſolute;" and the Gentlemen I now deal with, may prove it in their uſual Way, that is, by affirming ſtrongly. But 'tis enough for us, that St. *Paul* was of another Opinion, for he plainly underſtood all the Promiſes made to the Church of *Rome*, to be conditional. His Sentiments are beſt expreſſed in his own Words, in the eleventh Chapter of his Epiſtle to that Church. " If " God ſpared not the natural Branches, (*i. e.* " the *Jews*) take heed leſt he alſo ſpare " not thee.-----Behold therefore the Good- " neſs and Severity of God; on them which " fell, Severity, but towards thee, Goodneſs, " if thou continue in his Goodneſs; other- " wiſe thou alſo ſhalt be cut off. *Rom.* xi. " 21. 22."

And here I fear the Gentleman will be diſpoſed to change the Weapon he once choſe. In the mean time I leave him, and his Fellow Writers, to fight it out with St. *Paul*; or to try, if they can reconcile his *if*, with their *ſhall*, his *may be*, and their *muſt not be*, together.

§ III. The ſecond Text, brought by the Author of the Manuſcript to prove the Infallibility of the *Roman* Church, is St. *Matth.* xxviii. 19. 20. " Go ye therefore, and teach " all Nations baptizing, *&c.* teaching them

" to

" to obſerve all Things whatſoever I have
" commanded you; and behold, I am with
" you always even unto the End of the
" World. It is clear (ſays he) [f] that this
" Promiſe is not to be reſtrained to the Per-
" ſons of the Apoſtles, who were not to
" live to the End of the World, and there-
" fore muſt certainly be directed to them
" and their Succeſſors, Paſtors of Chriſt's
" Church through all Ages; and 'tis no
" leſs clear, that Chriſt here promiſes his
" powerful Preſence and Aſſiſtance, not
" for four or five hundred Years only, but
" always to the End of the World; and
" conſequently the Body of the Paſtors of
" Chriſt's Church will never go aſtray in
" the By-paths of Hereſy, or damnable
" Error, having him for their Guide, who
" is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*"

The Author of the *Shorteſt Way* [g] has alſo brought this Text, and in a Way no leſs peremptory, but more pompous; though I ſhall not tranſcribe his Words, as they are both to the ſame Purpoſe.

Now, thus far I agree with theſe learned Gentlemen, that this Promiſe is made to the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors, and that Chriſt's powerful Preſence and Aſſiſtance is

[f] Parag. iii.
[g] Part i. p. 28. &c.

is here promiſed to his Church, not for four or five hundred Years only, but unto the End of the World. But here I muſt ſtop, and am ſorry I cannot go all their Lengths.

For, in this Text there is no Mention of *Roman*, more than of *Greek*, or *Aſiatick* Churches: The Promiſe is evidently made to the *whole Church*; and by what excluſive Right does any one Member appropriate that which belongs to the whole Body? It is already ſhewed, that *Roman* and *Catholick* mean no more the ſame Thing, than Part and Whole do; and how then comes the *Roman*, to claim the Privilege granted to the Catholick Church?

For, however they may fancy the former Promiſe made to St. *Peter* only, and his Church; yet by their own Acknowledgment, this Promiſe is made *to all the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors*, and conſequently it belongs to St. *James*, St. *John*, St. *Paul*, *&c.* and their Succeſſors, at *Jeruſalem*, in *Aſia*, in *Greece*, and every where, as well as to St. *Peter*, and his Succeſſors at *Antioch* or *Rome*.

Beſides, there is ſome Reaſon to doubt whether the *Aſſiſtance* here promiſed, will always be to a Degree of *Infallibility*, as it was to the Apoſtles themſelves, becauſe there

is

is not always the ſame Occaſion for it; for their Succeſſors, though they were to preach and baptize, yet they had not a new Goſpel to write, or another Religion to propagate and ſettle in the World.

Upon the whole, that this Text contains a Promiſe of Infallibility, and that it ſhall belong to none but the *Roman* Church, (which are the two Points theſe Writers want to prove) cannot be inferred, either from the Words of this Promiſe, or from the Reaſon of it.

The Words are, *Behold I am with you always, &c.* Words full of Comfort and Encouragement indeed, not to them only, but to their Succeſſors, nay, and to all the Faithful, as well as the Paſtors of the Church; but that they promiſe no leſs than conſtant infallible Aſſiſtance, cannot well be inferred from the Words themſelves, if we may be allowed to judge of their Meaning, by comparing them with other Words of the ſame Value and Importance. Thus, our Lord promiſeth, [h] "where two or three "are met together in my Name, there am "I in the midſt of them." And thus the Promiſe made to *Joſhua*, [i] "I will never "leave thee, nor forſake the," is by the Apoſtle

[h] St. Matth. xviii. 20.
[i] Joſh. i. 5.

Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*, [k] applied to all Chriſtians, and every good Man. I hope theſe Gentlemen would not infer from theſe Promiſes, that every private Chriſtian, every good Man, or every little Society met for Devotion, is infallible, for this would bring the *Roman* Church too many Partners in that Privilege: And yet, if any ſhould take it into his Head to maintain, that every private Congregation is infallible, he might do it in the ſame Way, and by the ſame Logick, with which theſe Authors reaſon for the Infallibility of their Church, *viz.* "Chriſt hath promiſed to every pri-" vate Chriſtian Congregation, that he will " be in the midſt of it.---Conſequently, " ſuch private Chriſtian Congregation will " never go aſtray in the By-paths of Here-" ſy, or damnable Error, having always in " the midſt of them, him who is the Way, " the Truth, and the Life."

And as this infallible Aſſiſtance to every Age of the Church, cannot be inferred from the *Words* of this Promiſe; ſo neither in the ſecond Place, can it be inferred from the *Reaſon* of it, which may beſt be collected from the Occaſion of making it.

Our Lord is here ſending forth his Apoſtles,

[k] Heb. xiii. 5.

poſtles, with Commiſſion to proſelyte the whole World to his Religion; and becauſe this was to be a Work of much Labour, and great Danger, as well as of high Authority, he promiſes for their Encouragement, that he would be always preſent, by his Spirit, not with them only, but with their Succeſſors in Office too, ſo as to continue to theſe Succeſſors the Authority which he now gave them, that is, to propagate the ſame Religion, to preach the ſame Doctrine, to make Diſciples to it in all the World, and to tranſact and ſeal his Covenant with them, by a federal Rite now inſtituted for that Purpoſe, *i. e.* Baptiſm, of which they were appointed the Miniſters, and promiſeth that he will afford the needful Support and Aſſiſtance to every ſucceeding Age of his Church.

In the firſt Age, the Difficulties being greater, the Oppoſition more fierce, and the Dangers more formidable, the Aſſiſtance communicated to the Twelve, and other Planters of Chriſtianity, amounted even to Infallibility: But when the great Difficulty was over, that is, when the Church was formed, and a ſtanding Rule eſtabliſhed, to which all after Ages were obliged to conform, the ſame Degree of Aſſiſtance was not neceſſary, and therefore

is not continued, otherwiſe we muſt allow all the Biſhops in the World to be inſpired, as the Apoſtles were, which is not contended for.

Archbiſhop *Laud* (in his Conference with Mr. *Fiſher*) has expreſſed this Matter diſtinctly, when ſpeaking of ſeveral Promiſes in the Goſpels [l], and this among the reſt, he ſays, " theſe Promiſes were made " of continual Preſence and Aſſiſtance, that " I grant; and they were made to the A- " poſtles and their Succeſſors, that I grant " too; but in a different Degree: For it " was of continual and infallible Aſſiſtance " to the Apoſtles, but to their Succeſſors, " of continual and fitting Aſſiſtance, but " not infallible.

But becauſe Dr. *Laud* may be conſidered as a Party in this Caſe, I ſhall mention another, againſt whom the Popiſh Writers would not chooſe to bring the ſame Objection; St. *Chryſoſtom*, in his Homily on this Part of the holy Goſpel [m], ſeems to have underſtood it in the very Way I have explained it; for he extends it to all the Faithful, as well as to the Paſtors, but ſays never a Word of the Infallibility of either. " Chriſt, " ſays

[l] St. Luke x. 16. St. John xiv. 16. St. Matth. xxviii. 20.

[m] D. Chryſoſ. homil. 91. in Matth. xxviii. tom. ii. p. 715. edit. Baſileæ, anno 1558.

" ſays he, commands them (*i. e.* the A-
" poſtles) to ſpread themſelves over the
" whole World, but at the ſame Time that
" he appoints them to great Things, he
" ſtrengthens their Minds, ſaying, *I am*
" *with you always*, &c. See here again
" their Authority, behold how this is ſaid
" for the Sake of ſending them forth.——
" Neither does he promiſe to be with them
" only, but with all thoſe, who after them
" ſhould believe, for the Apoſtles were not
" to live to the World's End: But he ſpeaks
" to the Faithful as to one Body.——Nei-
" ther do ye, ſaith Chriſt, object to me
" the Difficulty of the Thing, for *I am*
" *with you*, who make all things eaſy.
" The ſame thing, which in the Old Te-
" ſtament he ſaid to the Prophets, (to *Je-*
" *remiah* pleading his Youth, and to *Mo-*
" *ſes* and *Ezekiel* withdrawing themſelves)
" *I am with you*, the ſame in this Place he
" ſaith to the Diſciples."

By this it appears, that St. *Chryſoſtom* underſtood this Promiſe, as an Encouragement not only to the Apoſtles in their difficult Undertaking, but to all Believers, in their ſeveral Stations and Capacities: But I hope, none will infer from thence that St. *Chryſoſtom* thought all Believers were infallible, becauſe the Apoſtles were ſo, any more

than that all *Jews* were infallible, becauſe their Prophets were ſo.

However they may pretend, that the Promiſe to St. *Peter*, (St. *Matth.* xvi.) is abſolute and unconditional, they cannot have the Confidence to alledge the ſame Thing here; for in this Text, the Condition appears in the very Face of the Promiſe, ſo that whatever this Promiſe contains, or to whomſoever it is made, it is like to prove nothing for the Church of *Rome*.

" Go ye, teach all Nations, and baptize, " *&c.* teaching them to obſerve all things, " whatſoever I have commanded you, and " lo! I am with you, *&c.*"

Here Chriſt's Preſence and Aſſiſtance is promiſed while they taught what Chriſt had commanded, becauſe ſo long they were certainly, (or, if you will, infallibly) in the right, but no longer; and therefore, if any of their Succeſſors ſhould teach what Chriſt has not commanded, or teach the direct contrary, they forfeit their Title to his Preſence and Aſſiſtance, and can lay no farther Claim to this Promiſe.

Now this is preciſely the Caſe of the preſent Church of *Rome*. —— Jeſus Chriſt inſtituting the Sacrament of his Body and Blood, ſaid, " drink ye all of this."—But the *Roman* Church ſays, none ſhall drink

drink of it but Prieſts. The Law (which Chriſt came not to deſtroy) ſays, "Thou "ſhalt neither make nor worſhip a graven "Image;" but the *Roman* Church allows both.——St. *Paul* (who was infallible, ſo far as he was inſpired) ſays, "we ſhould "neither teach nor worſhip (in the Con-"gregation) in an unknown Tongue."—— The *Roman* Church ordains the direct contrary, *&c.*

After all which, it ſeems not very ſelf-denied, to challenge to themſelves an excluſive Privilege, when they have ſo notoriouſly failed, and come ſhort of the Condition, on which that Privilege was promiſed to the whole Church of Chriſt upon Earth.

§ IV. The third Proof of Infallibility in the *Roman* Church adduced by the Author of the Manuſcript, [n] is taken from two Texts (coupled together, though at ſome Diſtance,) in St. *John*'s Goſpel; the one in *Chap.* xiv. *Ver.* 16, 17. where our Saviour tells his Apoſtles, "that he will pray the Fa-"ther, and he ſhall give them another "Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, "*&c.*" and the other *Chap.* xvi. *Ver.* 33. he aſſures them, "that the Spirit of Truth, "when

[n] Vide the Goſpels. Exod. xx. and 1 Cor. xiv.

" when he is come, will guide them into " all Truth."——" In theſe Words, ſays " he, is promiſed the Direction of the Ho- " ly Spirit, to guide, not only the Apoſtles, " but alſo their Succeſſors, into all Truth, " for Chriſt aſſures the Holy Spirit will " abide with them for ever; whereas " the Apoſtles were to live only a ſmall " Number of Years in which they were to " be preſerved from all Errors."

The Author of the *Shorteſt Way*, &c. has brought forth theſe Texts to the ſame Purpoſe [o].

To form a right Underſtanding of the Nature and Extent of this Promiſe, two Things ſeem neceſſary to be enquired into, *viz.* what is mean'd by *all Truth*; and who are the *Perſons* to whom this Promiſe belongs.

1*ſt*, As to leading them into all Truth, though the Promiſe ſeems univerſal in its Terms, yet it is limited in its Meaning; for no Man ever imagined, that the Holy Spirit was to lead the Apoſtles into the Knowledge of all natural Truths, into all the Depths of Philoſophy, or into the Myſteries of all Arts and Sciences; but only that he ſhould inſtruct them in ſuch Things, as their Office and Truſt required and

[o] Part i. p. 28, 29.

and obliged them to know, that is, religious and divine Truths.

It is plain then, that ſome Limitation ought to be laid upon this general Promiſe, of leading *into all Truth*; and the beſt Way of doing that, is by the Context: Now, if we limit theſe general Words in this very reaſonable Way, the plain and obvious Senſe of the Promiſe will appear to be this, That becauſe there were ſome Truths, fit for the Apoſtles to know, which they were not capable of receiving at that Time, while our Lord was with them in Perſon, [p] "I have "yet many Things to ſay to you, but you "cannot bear them now," ſays our bleſſed Lord; therefore, after his Aſcenſion, he would ſend his Holy Spirit, to inſtruct them in thoſe Things, and to guide them into all thoſe Truths, which it was not then ſeaſonable to acquaint them with; ſuch as the Nature of his Kingdom upon Earth, which was to be ſpiritual only, and not intended to interfere with the juſt Rights of temporal Princes, and the enlarging the Extent of it, by bringing the Gentiles into his Church, *&c.* But by what Art any Man can infer from thence, that our Saviour would continue ſuch conſtant new Revelations, or ſuch

[p] St. John xvi. 12.

ſuch infallible Aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit, with any particular Man or Church to the End of the World, is not eaſy to conceive.

For this Promiſe plainly implies the Revelation of ſome new Truths to the Apoſtles, which they were not inſtructed in before, and therefore cannot (in that Senſe) belong to any Church in after Ages: For even that Church, which claims Infallibility as her ſpecial Prerogative, does not pretend to any new Revelation of Objects of Faith not known before, and therefore can challenge nothing extraordinary in virtue of this Promiſe. This will appear the more plain, if we conſider,

2*dly*, The *Perſons* to whom this Promiſe belongs. It was made perſonally and primarily to the Apoſtles, and to them it was abſolute, and proved ſo to be, by the Miracles, which gave Teſtimony to them: The Condition of the Chriſtian Religion then, required ſuch infallible Aſſiſtance to be afforded them, as might ſatisfy Poſterity, that the Grounds of it were laid in perfect and unerring Truth, and that every Thing taught and delivered down by them, and derived from them, might be relied upon, without Hazard of Deceit or Impoſition.

But from the Tenor of this Promiſe, it cannot

cannot be inferred, that the ſame infallible Aſſiſtance was to be continued to the Succeſſors of theſe Apoſtles, the Governors of the Church in ſucceeding Ages, becauſe they did not ſtand in the ſame Need of it; for they had no new Doctrines to publiſh, if they had had it, and they might well enough interprete and explain old ones without it: And we have Reaſon to think, that our bleſſed Lord (who does nothing in vain) had not in his Intention to give that Privilege, which was not neceſſary in itſelf, nor agreeable to the Reaſon of the Thing.

The Apoſtles were to give a Rule, to which all ſucceeding Ages were to conform, and this Rule muſt be exact and ſtraight, to qualify it to anſwer the Purpoſes of a Rule.—But there is not the ſame Occaſion for Things to be ſo, that come to be meaſured by this Rule, becauſe, whatever in theſe is crooked, or defective, or redundant, will ſoon be diſcovered by comparing it with, and amended by conforming it to that Rule. This ſhews that the ſame Meaſure of Aſſiſtance is not neceſſary to applying the Rule, as there is to forming it.

Thus again, the Apoſtles are called the

Foundation [q], on which the Church is built, that is, they laid the Foundation, and therefore it behoved them to be infallibly directed to do it right: But all the Care left for thoſe that come after, is, to ſuit the Building to that Foundation, to follow the firſt Model, and to ſee that their Materials and Workmanſhip be of a Piece with it. And in this they may go right very ſafely, and well, without being abſolutely ſecured againſt the Poſſibility of going wrong. St. *Paul* evidently alludes to this, when he ſays, " that [r] Chriſt alone laid the Foun- " dation, but that others built upon it, as " they were differently able and diſpoſed." Now, every wiſe Architect is ſenſible of the Difference between laying a Foundation and carrying up a Superſtructure: In the former, no Nicety can be too great, no Skill, or Care, can be over-much; but in the latter, the Proportions ly ready in Sight, and a moderate reaſonable Care and Aſſiſtance will ſuffice, becauſe the Foundation itſelf is a Direction for making the reſt of the Edifice agreeable to it.

Here then lies the Difference between the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors, between the

[q] Eph. ii. 20.
[r] 1 Cor. iii. 11.

the first and latter Ages of the Church, which shews plainly, that an infallible Guidance of the Holy Spirit, is not so necessary now as it was then, and for that Reason is not continued now, any more than those other miraculous Powers and Gifts (of Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues, Prophecy, Healing, *&c.*) which were poured forth, together with the infallible Assistance of the Holy Ghost, upon the Apostles and first Planters of Christianity, to confirm their doctrines: For the Miracles which they wrought by the Power of the Spirit, were proper Vouchers, that the Persons which wrought them both spoke and wrote by the very same Spirit.

That the divine Spirit was promised, to abide with, to guide and comfort the Church, and every faithful Member of it, not only to the End of the Apostolick Age, but even to the End of the World, is not denied; but his Operations are continued now, in a Manner very different, and in a Degree far inferior to that which the Apostles had; his *Inspiration* made them infallible in their Doctrine, and his Assistance may make every Christian sound, and orthodox, and steady, in the Belief of that Doctrine, if they please to make use of it,

which they may, or may not do, as they incline.

This Promiſe, which was abſolute to the Apoſtles, belongs to the Church in all Ages, under certain Conditions and Limitations; they were infallible as following the immediate Dictates of the Holy Ghoſt, in all they ſpoke or wrote; the Church (collective or diſtributive) is infallibly right too, ſo far as her Doctrines and Decrees agree with their Writings, and no farther.

The accurate Mr. *Chillingworth* has illuſtrated this Difference by a very pertinent Similitude[s], "The Apoſtles and the Church "(ſays he) may be compared to the Star "and the Wiſe Men: The Star was di- "rected by the Finger of God, and there- "fore could not but go right to the Place "where Chriſt lay; but the Wiſe Men "were led by the Star, ſo that if they "would, they might follow it, if they "would not, they might chooſe: So was "it between the Apoſtles writing Scripture "and the Church; they, in their Writing, "were infallibly aſſiſted to propoſe no- "thing as a divine Truth, but what real- "ly was ſo. The Church is alſo led into "all

[s] William Chillingworth's *Safe Way*, &c, Chap. iii, § xxxiv. p. 106.

" all Truth, but it is by the interveening
" of the Apoſtles Writings, by which ſhe
" is led, juſt as the Wiſe Men were led by
" the Star, or as a Traveller is directed by a
" Mercurial Statue, or as a Pilot is by his
" Chart and Compaſs, led *ſufficiently*, not
" *irreſiſtibly*, led ſo as that ſhe may fol-
" low, not ſo as that ſhe muſt."

This ſeems to give the true State of the Caſe, and ſhews, how in this Reſpect too, the Spirit abides with Chriſt's Diſciples for ever; for he abides with all whom he aſſiſts, but he does not make all whom he aſſiſts *infallible*: We have not now the like viſible and wonderful Effects of his divine Preſence which the firſt Diſciples had, becauſe we need them not; but we have, at leaſt we may have, (if we are not unfaithful and wanting to ourſelves) as much as is ſufficient for our preſent Circumſtances, and that is enough.

Cardinal *Bellarmine* brings this Text to prove the Infallibility of a General Council, confirmed by the Pope; and indeed the Argument he founds upon it is a very ſtrange one.—" The Apoſtles, ſeverally conſidered,
" were infallible, by Virtue of this Pro-
" miſe, and their Succeſſors, ſays he, are
" comprehended in this Promiſe; but their
" Succeſſors are not infallible in their ſeve-

" ral

" ral Capacities, as the Apoſtles were; there-
" fore, ſays he, they are infallible, when
" they are gathered together."

This is neither more nor leſs, than from Fallibility in the Premiſſes, to infer Infallibility in the Concluſion; whereas, to reaſon juſtly, and conſequentially, it muſt rather be concluded, that, if this Promiſe of leading into all Truth, be underſtood of the Apoſtles, and their Succeſſors, in the ſame Manner, that is, ſo as to make them both infallible, then, as the Apoſtles were infallible, not only when met together in Council, but ſeverally conſidered, or in their ſingle Capacities, ſo muſt each of their Succeſſors be too; which is more than any *Roman* Catholick contends for.

I muſt alſo obſerve, that ſome reformed Catholicks have taken the ſame Cardinal ſeverely to task for not dealing fairly with this Part of the Goſpel, in that his Argument is artfully patched up from two diſtinct Texts, which he would have paſs for one. Thus, that God would lead them into all Truth, he proves from St. *John* xvi. 13. and that God would do this for ever, he would fain prove from St. *John* xiv. 16. 17. ——Whereas this Text does not ſay, that God would lead them into all Truth for ever, but only that the Spirit ſhould abide

with

with them for ever, and that as a Comforter, which is a very different Thing; for I believe, no wiſe Man of the *Romiſh* Church will affirm, that every one, with whom the Spirit abides as a Comforter, is infallible.

The Gentlemen with whom I now deal, have copied after the Cardinal, in jumbling theſe two Texts together, upon which I ſhall forbear to make farther Remarks, ſince the Fraud is already reproved in the learned Author from whom they borrowed it.

The Sum of this Section is, The Apoſtles were infallible ſo far as they were inſpired, and no farther; but the *Roman* Church does not pretend to be inſpired as they were, therefore ſhe is not infallible.

And to let the Reader ſee, how cautious Men ſhould be of interpreting general Words to their utmoſt Latitude: Put the Caſe, that an unwary or fanciful Perſon, upon reading theſe Texts of St. *John*, 1 *Epiſt. Chap.* ii. *ver.* 20. 27. "Ye have an Unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things, and the ſame Anointing teacheth you all things,"-----ſhould take it into his Head to maintain, not only the *Infallibility*, but the *Omniſcience* of all Believers; he might do it with as good a Grace, and in the ſame Way of Argumentation, as theſe People do the Infallibility of their Church,

Church, from the Promiſe of leading into all Truth.

§ V. The fourth Argument for the Infallibility of the *Roman* Church, brought by the Author of the Manuſcript, is fetched from St. *Matthew* xviii. 17. " If he ne-
" glect to hear the Church, let him be un-
" to thee as an Heathen and a Publican."---
" From which Words, ſays our Author, it
" appears clearly, that all Men are bound to
" obey and ſubmit to the Judgment of the
" Church, (*N. B.* That by this we muſt
" underſtand the Church of *Rome*, or the
" Argument goes for nothing) unleſs they
" would be look'd upon and dealt with as
" the worſt and wickedeſt of Men; and
" if this be true, in the ſmalleſt Treſpaſſes,
" according to our Saviour's Words, how
" much more in Offences, where the Souls
" of Men, the Truth of Religion, and the
" Unity and Peace of the Church are en-
" dangered?

The Author of the *Shorteſt Way*, brings the ſame Text [t], and ſays, " Can any Man
" deſerve theſe infamous Characters (*i. e.*
" of Heathen and Publican) for not hear-
" ing a Church that can teach falſe Doctrine?

Theſe

[t] Part i. p. 30.

These Words, *hear the Church*, taken by themselves, and separated from all that went before, would seem to speak out this Matter, full and strong; but when the Occasion of them is considered, as it stands in the preceeding Words, with which they are evidently and inseparably connected, nothing can be more clear, than that our Saviour is here speaking only of such private Differences as may happen amongst Men, (and that not in Points of Faith, but of Fact) and of the Way of composing them. "If thy "Brother sin against thee,"——What was to be done? First, private Endeavours were to be used, then the Mediation of Friends was to be tried, and if nothing else would do, the Matter was to be referred to the Church, the Body or Assembly to which they belonged, and they who would not be gained upon by such wise Methods, were no longer to be esteemed as Brethren, but were to be looked upon as very bad Men, like Heathens: They might upon such Obstinacy and Refractorineſs be excommunicated, and prosecuted afterwards in temporal Courts, since (by their Perverseneſs) they had forfeited all Right to that Tenderneſs and Charity which is due to Fellow Christians.

St. *Chryſoſtom*, in his Homily on this Text, has explained it in this Way [n]; the beſt Commentators have made no more out of it; and indeed this Expoſition comes up ſo fully to the Occaſion and Scope of the Words, that there is no Shadow of Reaſon, to carry them any farther.

But let us for once take theſe Words, *hear the Church*, by themſelves, and in their utmoſt Extent, yet ſtill the Church of *Rome* is not in the Text: How then comes ſhe to make a Monopoly of the Privilege here conveyed? Has not the *Greek* Church, or have not the Churches of *England* and *Scotland* as good Right to be heard, and to claim the Benefit of this Privilege, as ſhe has? If it be ſaid, they have not, as they do not pretend to be infallible.---It is anſwered, no more has the *Roman* Church, while ſhe does not bring better Vouchers; on the contrary, ſhe is the more to be ſuſpected, becauſe of that ſaucy, groundleſs Pretence.

But once more, and for Argument's Sake, let it be ſuppoſed, that our Lord had ſaid, *hear the Church of Rome*; yet even that would not bear out her Pretence of Infallibility, as theſe Gentlemen would inſinuate. Authority indeed it does imply, but Authority

[n] Homil. 61. in cap. xviii. Matth. tom. ii. col. 509. &c.

rity does not always imply Infallibility.---- Thus Children are commanded to obey their Parents, and Subjects their Princes, under ſevere Penalties [x]; but are Parents or Magiſtrates therefore infallible? Our Lord ſends forth, not his Apoſtles, but his ſeventy Diſciples, not in a Body, but by two and two, with this Authority, "he that heareth you, "heareth me, *&c.* [y]." But did ever any Body pretend to infer from this, that every Prieſt, or every Miniſter of Gods Word, or every Couple of them is infallible?

That implicite Faith and blind Obedience, which the *Romaniſts* would infer from this Text, is a very dangerous Doctrine, and has done a great deal of Miſchief in the World, full as much as ever private Judgment has done, notwithſtanding all the Reproach and Condemnation it meets with. The *Iſraelites* committed Idolatry, in worſhipping the Golden Calf, notwithſtanding the Countenance and Authority of their High Prieſt [z]: Our Lord foretels the Fate of the "Blind "leading the Blind [a]."---And St. *Peter* aſſures us, that the *Jews* were guilty of a very

[x] Coloſſ. iii. 20. Deut. xxi. 18. Joſh. i. 18. Rom. xiii. 1. *&c.*

[y] St. Luke x. 16.

[z] Exod. xxxii.

[a] St. Matth. xv. 14.

ry great Sin, in crucifying our Saviour [b], notwithſtanding they did it in Obedience to their Rulers; and in this very Act, they did but *hear the Church*, and ſubmit to her Judgment.

The Prerogative of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, the Pre-eminence of his Authority, is expreſſed in theſe Words, "Him ſhall ye "hear in all things whatſoever he ſhall "ſay unto you [c]." The Apoſtles, though "they were infallible, did not arrogate this to themſelves; no, all the Lengths they went, was, "Be ye Followers of us, as we "are of Chriſt." St. *Paul* diſclaims a Dominion over the Faith of Chriſtians;---Now Subjection and Dominion are Relatives: So that if the People owe an implicite Subjection of their Faith to their Paſtors, the Paſtors have an abſolute Dominion over the Faith of the People; which is ſomewhat more than Apoſtolical. In ſhort, this Doctrine of implicite Faith and Obedience, muſt needs be apocryphal, ſo long as the Epiſtle to the *Galatians* is canonical.——"Though we, or an Angel "from Heaven, preach any other Doctrine "unto you, than that which we have "preached

[b] Acts iii. 14. 17.
[c] Acts iii. 22. 1 Cor. xi. 1. 2 Cor. i. 24.

" preached unto you, let him be accur-
" sed [d]." If any one will compare this with that very odd, impious Aſſertion of Cardinal *Bellarmine* [e], " That if the Pope " ſhould err, in commanding Vices, and for-" bidding Virtues, the Church were bound " to believe Vices to be good, and Virtues " to be evil,"——he will ſee whether the Cardinal's Opinion be the ſame with that of the Apoſtolick Age; and whether the preſent *Roman* Church (which is ſo liberal in diſpenſing her Curſes to all that differ from her Sentiments) does not herſelf come within the Compaſs of the Apoſtle's Cenſure and Anathema.

The Truth of the Matter is, this Text, *hear the Church*, is improperly adduced here, being quite foreign to the Purpoſe for which it is brought; for if it proves the Church's Infallibility in any Thing, it muſt be in the Thing referred to in the Context, that is, the Church's *Cenſures*.——But they themſelves allow the Church is fallible in her Cenſures, as depending upon Teſtimony, and Matters of Fact; and therefore it looks very ſtrange to infer from thence her Infallibility in other Things which are not ſpoken of in this Place.

§ VI.

[d] Gal. i. 8, 9.
[e] De Rom. Pontif, lib. iv. cap. 5.

§ VI. The fifth Argument brought by the Author of the Manuſcript to prove the Infallibility of his Church, is taken from 1 *Tim.* iii. 15.——"Where, ſays he [f], St. "*Paul* calls the Church of the living God, "the *Pillar* and *Ground* of *Truth*;-----and "if ſhe be the Pillar and Ground of Truth, "ſhe can never ſupport or uphold Error, "or Hereſy, and conſequently ſhe will "never err in Matters of Faith."——And the Author of the *Shorteſt Way* [g] tells us in his peremptory Way, "that this Say-"ing of the Apoſtle would be flatly falſe, "if the Church were capable of teach-"ing any thing contrary to God's revealed "Word."——

But what if it is *Timothy*, and not the Church, that is here called a *Pillar*? If this is the Caſe, theſe Gentlemen muſt put their Argument into another Shape, or it will conclude nothing.-----Some learned Men, and accurate Criticks [h] have been of this Opinion: They ſay, the Apoſtle had immediately before called the Church of God a Houſe, and that to have called her a Pillar with the very next Breath, would not have come up to that Propriety and Elegance of Stile,

[f] Parag. vi.
[g] Part i. p. 30.
[h] Mr. Chillingworth.

Stile, for which St. *Paul*'s Writings are remarkable: But if we allow of an Ellipsis here, (a Figure not unusual with the inspired Writers) the Sense, without any Violence to the Words, will run thus, "That "thou (viz. *Timothy*) mayst know how "thou oughtest to behave thy self in the "House of God, which is the Church, as "a Pillar, or as becomes a Pillar."

But I am far from advising the Reader to lay undue Stress on Criticism.——And therefore (not to insist farther on this) let it be granted, that it is the Church, which is here called the Pillar and Ground of the Truth; yet even thus, it will not serve the Purpose it was brought for. For, either this is to be understood of the universal Church, or of a particular Church, there can be no Medium.

If it is to be understood of the universal Church, then it proves only, (what is not denied) *viz.* the *Indefectibility* of the whole Church, which may well enough consist with the Error and Apostacy of several particular Churches, tho' they may once have been very eminent for their Faith, Purity, and Piety: Of this we have many melancholy Instances, particularly in the Churches of *Asia* and *Africa*; and what has been their unhappy Fate, may be that of the *Roman*,

or

or any particular Church, and yet the Catholick Church not fail.

But if theſe Words are to be underſtood of any *particular Church*, it muſt be of that particular one whereof *Timothy* was Biſhop, and that was not *Rome*, but *Epheſus*, which (notwithſtanding of her being then a Pillar and Ground of Truth) afterwards fell away. And ſo our Author's Argument will come out in this Form, *viz.* "The Church "of *Epheſus*, which has long ago failed, "was once ſo glorious a Church, as to be "called by St. *Paul* a Pillar and Ground "of Truth;——therefore the Church of "*Rome* is infallible."——Sure, Men muſt learn a new Syſtem of Logick, e'er they can find any Connexion or Conſequence here.

But whatever Church is here meant, let us ſuppoſe it is the Church of *Rome*, yet the Argument will ſtill be unconcluding; for the Text intimates only what that Church was at that Time: But from a Declaration of the Church's preſent State, to infer an Aſſurance of her perpetual Continuance in that State, looks like ſtraining the Text too far. "*Zion* was once an Ha-"bitation of Righteouſneſs," and yet the Prophet *Iſaiah* was not miſinformed, when he ſaid, "The faithful City was become

"an

" an Harlot [i]." Nay, if this Way of reaſoning is juſt, our Church muſt (by their own Confeſſion) be ſound and orthodox ſtill, after all the bitter Things they have ſaid againſt us: For, if the *Roman* Church is this Pillar, then certainly, while we were in the Communion of the *Roman* Church, we were a Part of this Pillar; and if (as my Authors ſay) this Pillar can never ſupport or uphold Error or Hereſy, or teach any Thing contrary to the revealed Word of God, then we can never have erred, and ſo there will be no Reaſon to perſuade People to leave our Communion, on Account of greater Safety in theirs.

I ſee no Way left to avoid the Strength of this, but by ſaying, that ſome Part of this Pillar may fall into Decay, and the reſt ſtand firm: Well, be it ſo, but pray why not the Part at *Rome*, as well as that in *Scotland*, ſince neither of the two is mentioned in the Text?

The Truth of the Matter is, this figurative Term, *Pillar*, implies Solidity, not Infallibility, it implies the Difficulty of its Removal, not the abſolute Impoſſibility of the Thing; it imports a Church's Duty, not her conſtant Practice, what ſhe ought

[i] Iſa. i. 21.

to be, not what ſhe always is. Thus "Rulers are ſaid to be a Terror, not to good "Works, but to the evil [k];" from which, the utmoſt we can infer is, that they ought to be, not that they always are ſo.----Thus our Saviour calls the chief Officers in his Church, "the Salt of the Earth," and yet he ſuppoſes it poſſible "that the Salt may "loſe its Savour [l]." And thus *Solomon* deſcribes the Duty, not the conſtant Practice of ſovereign Princes.---- "A divine Sen"tence is in the Lips of the King, (ſays he) "*his Mouth tranſgreſſeth not in Judgment* [m]."

Had the New Teſtament contained any Declaration ſeemingly ſo ſtrong in Favours of the Church of *Rome*, *That ſhe tranſgreſſeth not in Judgment*, it had ſaved theſe learned Gentlemen the Labour of bringing ſeven or eight different Texts, and all of them ſo remote from the Purpoſe for which they are brought.

Once more, if it is poſſible for a Church to be a Pillar of Truth, and a Seat of Error at the ſame Time, the Conſequence drawn from this Text, (that the Church is a Pillar of Truth, therefore ſhe is infallible) will appear to be not juſtly formed: And this,

[k] Rom. xiii. 3.
[l] St. Matth. v. 13.
[m] Prov. xvi. 10.

this, however uncouth it may look at firſt, is really true. For,

Let us but draw back the Curtain, with which this Metaphor is vailed, and we ſhall find, that to be a Pillar of the Truth, and a Defender or Supporter of the Faith, is the ſame Thing: Now, every one that has read the Bible, or looked into the Records of paſt Ages, with any Attention, muſt have obſerved ſeveral Inſtances of Perſons and Societies, profeſſing all neceſſary Truths, and yet at the ſame Time tainted with ſeveral groſs Errors. Thus, St. *Paul* tells us of ſome, who "held to the Foundation, "while they built Hay and Stubble upon "it [n]." And it appears from St. *John*'s Epiſtles to the ſeven Churches in *Aſia* [o], that this was the Caſe with moſt of them, (this of *Epheſus* not excepted) that while they defended the Truth of Chriſtianity againſt *Jews* and Pagans, ſome of them did alſo maintain the Doctrines of *Balaam* and *Jezebel*, and the Hereſy of the *Nicolaitans*.

I have already ſhewed [p], and ſhall therefore not repeat it here, that this was the Caſe of the Church of *Rome* at the Time of our Reformation.——And really when

[n] 1 Cor. iii. 11.
[o] Rev. ii.
[p] P. 46, 84.

it is considered, that the Apostles themselves, even while they lived, could not wholly preserve every Church they planted free from actual Corruption, it will appear a goodly Confidence in any Church now, to pretend to be above the Possibility of Corruption, and then make that very bare, shameless Pretence, the Pillar and Ground, the Shield and Defence of all her Errors.

I am afraid I have given the Reader too much Trouble on this Text, which I might have prevented, by telling him at first, that this Expression, *Pillar* and *Ground of Truth*, is plainly figurative, and it is never safe to build upon Metaphors, far less to lay too much Weight upon them. — For whatever the Importance of it may be, it is still a *Metaphor*, and therefore can be no Argument.

§ VII. The next Text brought to uphold *Roman* Infallibility, is *Ephes.* iv. 11. 12, *&c.* "He gave some Apostles, *&c.* and "some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, that we henceforth "be no more Children, tossed to and fro, "and carried about with every Wind of "Doctrine, by the Slight of Men, *&c.*" "Whence it is apparent, says my Author, "that Pastors and Teachers are placed in "the Church to secure the Faith of Chri-

"stians,

" ſtians, and to hinder them to be toſſed a-
" bout with every Wind of Doctrine, which
" Bleſſing the Paſtors cannot procure to
" the People, unleſs the Paſtors themſelves
" be ſecured from wavering and Error [9]."

The Author of the Manuſcript is ſingle in this Argument, he is not accompanied by the Author of the *Shorteſt Way*; ſo that if it proves any Thing for him, he has all the Honour, but if it is found to operate the contrary Way, he muſt bear the Blame of betraying his Cauſe, and had better have let it alone: I have tranſcribed the Text exactly as the Gentleman has laid it, though I muſt afterwards take the Liberty to ſet it down in St. *Paul*'s Way.

The Apoſtle is here ſpeaking of Chriſt's triumphant Aſcenſion to his moſt glorious Throne in the higheſt Heavens, there to exerciſe an univerſal Dominion over, and ſhed his Influences upon, every Part of his myſtical Body, the Church; for which Purpoſe, St. *Paul* farther ſays, that he qualified Perſons for, and ſent them forth in the ſeveral different Capacities here mentioned, *viz*, " Apoſtles, Prophets, Evan-
" geliſts, Paſtors and Teachers," that is, ſome to reveal his Will, others to explain it, ſome to propagate and record it in authentick

[9] Parag. vii.

tick Writings, ſome to inſtruct the People in it, and to govern according to it, (thus recorded) where it was already received; and theſe different Offices (he ſays) and the Powers for performing them, were all deſigned for the Benefit of the Body in common, and every Party concerned was hereby obliged to contribute his beſt Endeavours for the Improvement and mutual Support of Believers, till by Means of all theſe ſeveral Offices, we attain to ſuch Strength, and Steadineſs, and ſound Judgment, as may ſet us above that childiſh Ignorance and Levity, which floats between different Opinions, and like a Wave is carried to this or that Side, by every Breath of Sophiſtry, every artful Turn of Argument managed by crafty Seducers, who employ their utmoſt Skill and Induſtry, to corrupt the Chriſtian Doctrine.

This is the plain and obvious Meaning of theſe four Verſes, but how they will be brought to ſpeak out Infallibility in the preſent *Roman* Church, is hard to deviſe. St. *Paul* here evidently points at the different Periods of Chriſtianity, its Infant and grown State, the firſt and latter Ages of the Church, and the different Helps and Aſſiſtances afforded to each.

The

The Church, in her Infant State, was moſt defenceleſs and expoſed, and therefore Care was taken to afford her *a proportionable Aſſiſtance*, Apoſtles to reveal the Will of God to her, Prophets (not only to foretel future Events, but) to interpret and explain this Revelation, and Evangeliſts to promulgate it, and record it in Writing.

But, when by theſe Means the Church was grown up to perfect Manhood and Maturity, and by being poſſeſſed of a Rule, (left her by theſe Apoſtles, Prophets, and Evangeliſts) to which all ſucceeding Ages were to conform, the Danger of being miſled grew leſs, then (in Proportion) her Helps and Aſſiſtances grew leſs too, and theſe *extraordinary Offices* of Apoſtles, Prophets and Evangeliſts (I mean ſuch Parts of theſe Offices as were intended only to be temporary, and are therefore called extraordinary) were diſcontinued, as being no longer neceſſary, when the ordinary Offices of Paſtors and Teachers might ſuffice.

This being the true State of the Caſe, our Author's Argument from this Paſſage muſt come out in a Shape ſo odd, that I am aſhamed to preſent it to the View of my Reader in its natural Dreſs, *viz.* "The "Church, in the Apoſtles Days, enjoyed "the Aſſiſtance and Direction of extraor-

"dinary

" dinary Officers, Prophets and Evange-
" liſts.——But the Church of *Rome* in our
" Days, enjoys only the ordinary Guid-
" ance of Paſtors and Teachers;——there-
" fore the one is as infallible as the o-
ther."—————" The one had a Spirit of
" Prophecy, and the Privilege of reveal-
" ing new Objects of Faith,------but the
" other pretends to neither;————there-
" fore they are equally privileged, and e-
" qually infallible.——The Apoſtles, Pro-
" phets, and Evangeliſts, were immediate-
" ly inſpired,----but the Paſtors and Teach-
" ers in ſucceeding Ages, neither are, nor
" pretend to be ſo;———therefore they
" are all upon a Level for Infallibilty.

Really, if this Gentleman had thought fit to aſſert the perpetual Continuance in his Church of a Spirit of Prophecy, and the Gift of Tongues, and a Power of writing a fifth Goſpel, and of enlarging the Canon of Scripture, he might have inferred from this Text all theſe Privileges, juſt as well as he has done her Infallibility.

Far be it from me to accuſe this Author of ill Deſign, in not giving his Diſciples this Text whole and entire, as he has done the preceeding ones; and yet I cannot but think, that if he had given the whole Text,

Text, in St. *Paul*'s Way, if inſtead of an *&c.* he had ſet in *Prophets* and *Evangeliſts*, as well as Paſtors and Teachers, the Unconcluſiveneſs of his Argument muſt have ſooner caſt up to View.

However, I will not pronounce harſhly upon his thus mincing of the Text, as it may be owing to Haſte or Overſight. But upon a Review of what is already ſaid on this Subject, I think I may venture to affirm, that a vain groundleſs Pretence of Infallibility, is among theſe *Slights of Men* St. *Paul* here cautions againſt, theſe *cunning Craftineſſes*, whereby they ly in wait to deceive.

§ VIII. It being thus made appear (I hope, with Abundance of Evidence) that the Promiſes in the Goſpel do not convey, or aſcertain to the *Roman* Church, this great Privilege of Infallibility ſhe contends for; it can ſcarce be imagined, that one Prophecy from the Old Teſtament (wherein ſhe is not particularly deſigned any more than in the other) ſhould bear her out in her high Pretences.

However, as a proper Supplement to the many Texts brought from the holy Goſpels and Epiſtles, the Author of the Manu-

ſcript [r] adds one from the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *Chap.* lix. *Ver.* 20, 21. "The Redeemer "ſhall come to *Zion*.----As for me, this is "my Covenant with them, ſaith the Lord, "my Spirit which is upon thee, and my "Words which I have put in thy Mouth, "ſhall not depart out of thy Mouth, nor "out of the Mouth of thy Seed, nor out "of the Mouth of thy Seeds Seed, ſaith "the Lord, from henceforth and for ever. "In this plain Text (ſays our Author) "God has given us a full Aſſurance, that "after the Coming of our Redeemer, his "Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth, which "he bequeatheth to his Church, ſhall ne-"ver abandon her; and that the Words "which he has put in her Mouth, that is, "the whole Chriſtian Truth in its Purity, "as it was taught her by the ſame Re-"deemer, ſhould never depart out of her "Mouth, but be conſtantly taught and "profeſſed by her Seed for ever.

That this Prophecy reſpects the Times of the *Meſſiah*, is acknowledged; and that it contains a moſt gracious Promiſe, that the Spirit of God ſhould abide with his Church for ever, is likeways acknowledged, with Thankfulneſs to God for it. How his Spirit

[r] Parag. viii.

Spirit abides with his Church, the Redeemer (who beſt knew it) has himſelf told us, in ſome of the Texts before conſidered, that is, he abides with the Church for ever, by his Aids and Influences, diſpenſed in ſuch Meaſures and Proportions, as the Exigencies of different Times and Circumſtances ſhould require.

With the Apoſtles, and firſt Planters of Chriſtianity, who were to publiſh and eſtabliſh Chriſt's Religion in the World, he abode by *infallible Direction*, ſo as to lead them into all Truth [s].----But with ſucceeding Ages of the Church (which have the Advantage of an *infallible Rule*, left by theſe unerring Guides) he abides only as a Comforter.

In this Senſe (and the Promiſe will ſtretch to none other) it is not denied, that the Holy Spirit abides with the Church for ever, nay, and with every Member of it, with every faithful Chriſtian for ever; but to infer from thence, that every one with whom the Holy Spirit abides as a Comforter, is infallible, would be to prove too much, and more than is contended for.

Had the Church of *Rome* retained the Spirit of Prophecy, had ſhe inherited all

 thoſe

[s] St. John xvi. 13. and xiv. 16.

thoſe extraordinary Offices mentioned in the preceeding Text, it is probable ſhe would not have interpreted this Prophecy of *Iſaiah* in the Manner ſhe has done, nor appropriated it to herſelf alone, as her Miſſionaries do: But ſo long as the Spirit of the Prophets is ſubject to the Prophets, ſo long as the Meaning of an ancient Prophecy is not explained and determined, by the immediate Impulſe of the ſame Spirit, by which that Prophecy was at firſt dictated, the beſt and ſafeſt Way for us to underſtand the Meaning and Extent of Old Teſtament Predictions, not already interpreted, and applied in the New, is to explain them by their Accompliſhment: And if we take this Way, and judge by the Event, the *Roman* Infallibility will not be collected from this Prophecy.

We are ſure, that whatever God foretels muſt come to paſs, and whatever he promiſeth muſt be performed; but if we will ſtrain his Predictions or Promiſes beyond his Intention, we ſet them in a direct Contradiction to his Providence, and thereby open the Mouths of Deiſts againſt all Revelation.

This may be illuſtrated by an Inſtance from the ſame Prophet, in the ſecond and eleventh Chapters of his Book, where he has

has deſcribed the peaceful Times of the *Meſſiah* in very ſtrong Terms.---- " That " they ſhall beat their Swords into Plough " Shares, and their Spears into pruning " Hooks; that Nation ſhall not lift up " Sword againſt Nation, neither ſhall they " learn War any more; that the Wolf ſhall " dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard " ſhall ly down with the Calf, and the " young Lion and the Fatling together, " and a little Child ſhall lead them. And the " Cow and the Bear ſhall feed, their young " Ones ſhall ly down together: And the " Lion ſhall eat Straw like the Ox. And " the ſucking Child ſhall play on the Hole " of the Aſp, and the weaned Child ſhall put " his Hand on the Cockatrice Den. They " ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my holy " Mountain; for the Earth ſhall be full of " the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Wa- " ters cover the Sea."

I deſire this Gentleman to ſpeak out, and tell plainly, whether this is really the State of Chriſtendom? His Church (even without the Aid of Infallibility) can well inform him the contrary is true; for no Chriſtian Church in the World, ever occaſioned ſo many Wars, and Rebellions, Murders and Maſſacres, as ſhe has done.

It is therefore evident, that this Prediction deſcribes

deſcribes rather what ought to be the State of Chriſtendom, than what it really is; and the Prophet's Meaning and Intendment is to ſhow, that as the *Meſſiah*, our bleſſed Redeemer, was to come to plant Peace on Earth, and good Will amongſt Men, ſo if his Precepts and Example were duly attended to, and obeyed and followed as they ought, the fierceſt Tempers would be ſubdued, and there ſhould be no War, Strife, Debate, or Contention, among his Diſciples.

But if this Prophecy ſhould be interpreted in a Manner as ſtrict and literal, as this Author would have us underſtand his laſt Text, it is not fulfilled, and probably will not be, 'till the *Meſſiah*'s ſecond Coming.

I believe I need ſay no more in Anſwer to his laſt Argument from Scripture, but only ſubmit it to the Judgment of the Reader, Whether an univerſal, uninterrupted, undiſturbed Peace among all Chriſtians, may not as fairly and conſequentially be inferred from this Prophecy, as the perpetual Infallibility of the *Roman* Church from the other?

§ IX. I thought I had done with the Scripture Proofs of their Church's Infallibility; but the Author of the *Shorteſt Way to end Diſ-*

Diſputes[t] has ſurprized me with another Text, one indeed with which I did not expect to be attacked from that Quarter; it is in St. *Matthew* vii. 13. where we are commanded to *beware of falſe Prophets*, &c.

This is turning our own Cannon againſt us, and attempting to beat us with our own Weapons: One would be apt to think this learned Gentleman had changed Sides, and was now maintaining the Cauſe he had elſewhere oppoſed and condemned, that of private Judgment. For how can we diſtinguiſh falſe Prophets from true? Or how can we judge of thoſe Fruits, by which they are to be known, but by the due Exerciſe of that exploded Faculty, our Reaſon, and Judgment? To have bid us *beware* on other Terms, had been only to bid a blind Man judge of Colours, or look well to his Steps; and there is no Command in the Goſpel ſo unreaſonable.

But the Gentleman meant nothing in Favour of private Judgment, ſo far from that, he upbraids all them who underſtand the Text in this Way, with bringing only "ſtrange Stuff and Incoherences.——No, "ſays he, Chriſt in commanding us to be-"ware of falſe Prophets, has ſet a Mark "of

[t] Part i. p. 30, 31.

" of Infamy upon the *Broachers of new* " *Doctrine*, to diſtinguiſh them from *his* " *Church*, which he therefore commands " us to believe, under Pain of eternal " Damnation."——And for Proof of this we are referred to St. *Mark* xvi. 16. " He " who believes ſhall be ſaved, and he who " believes not ſhall be damned."

This ingenious Author is ſtill unlucky in the Choice of his Proofs, for there is no Mention of any Church (certainly not of the *Roman*) in this Text. But let it be ſuppoſed for once, that the Church of *Rome* had been found here, yet may there not be falſe Prophets in a true Church? Were not the Doctrines of *Balaam*, *Jezebel*, and the *Nicolaitans*, maintained in ſome of the Churches of *Aſia*, even while they continued to be true Churches? And are there not as many *new Doctrines* (Doctrines untaught and unknown in the Apoſtolick Age) maintained in the preſent Church of *Rome*, as in any of the Eaſtern, or in the Reformed Churches.

Now, theſe *new Doctrines* are (confeſſedly) the *Fruits*, by which *falſe Prophets* are to be known: But unleſs we will *beware* without conſidering, and condemn without Evidence, we muſt firſt examine whether the Doctrines are new, and how is this to be

be done otherwiſe than by the due Uſe of our Reaſon and Judgment?

If it be ſaid, that in ſuch Caſes of Dubitancy, we ought *to hear the Church*, and ſubmit to her Authority; ſo ſay I too, if it is meant of the catholick or univerſal Church of Chriſt: But if it is meant of the Church of *Rome*, or any particular Church, firſt, we muſt find out what particular Church it is (whether Eaſtern or Weſtern, whether Reformed or Unreformed) to which we ought to ſubmit; and that can be done only by the due Exerciſe of our private Judgment, to which this Author's Book is an Appeal, notwithſtanding all he has ſaid againſt it; for it is in vain to bring Arguments from Scripture, or Tradition to convince us, that theirs is the only true Church, and we are Hereticks, and that therefore we ought to abjure our own Communion and embrace theirs, unleſs our Reaſon is ſatisfied, that theſe Arguments are true and concluding: So that we are juſt where we were, and all our Author's Fetches, and fine Flouriſhes, have not brought theſe Texts to prove what he brought them for.

But the Matter of Fact is, that in this Place of St. *Mark*, Jeſus Chriſt gives Commiſſion to the Apoſtles whom he had choſen, " to go into all the World, and preach

 the

" the Goſpel to every Creature,"---that is, to eſtabliſh his catholick or univerſal Church upon Earth, not reſtricted to any one Region or Country, as the *Jewiſh* Church had been; and then tells them, what the different Fates would be of thoſe who received the Chriſtian Faith, and of thoſe who did not. " He that believes, *&c.*"

Now put this Author's Argument into Form, and it comes out thus, " Jeſus Chriſt " has ſaid, that they who reject the Chriſti- " an Faith taught by his infallible Apoſtles, " and vouched by inconteſtable Miracles, " ſhall be damned.-----But the Church of " *Rome*, has broached new Doctrines, has " added to the ancient Faith (taught by " theſe Apoſtles, and received by the pri- " mitive Church) twelve new Articles, and " does not work inconteſtable Miracles to " vouch theſe new Articles, as the Apoſtles " did to vouch the old Ones, and yet claims " the ſame Authority to herſelf, and the " ſame (or greater) Submiſſion from the " Faithful, as the Apoſtles did.---Therefore " ſhe is as infallible as the Apoſtles were: " The Danger of not ſubmitting to her " Authority, is equal to that of rejecting " the Apoſtles Doctrine; and they who do " not believe that ſhe is the Mother and " Miſtreſs of all Churches, and that her

" Biſhop,

" Biſhop, the Pope, is the Head of the " whole catholick Church, and Chriſt's " Vicar General upon Earth, ſhall as cer- " tainly be damned, as they who deny, " that *Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of the living* " *God.*"

However Men may fancy themſelves privileged to do Evil, with good Deſign, or to promote Truth by Means of Falſhood and Sophiſtry, I really cannot help wondering, how any Man of ordinary Modeſty, could offer ſuch bare-faced Affronts to the common Senſe and Reaſon of Mankind.

It has been already obſerved in this Treatiſe[u], that no Man, or Company of Men, can be infallible, unleſs God beſtow Infallibility upon them; for Infallibility is not a natural Endowment, but a ſupernatural Gift; and therefore no Reaſon, nothing but plain and expreſs Scripture, can prove the Biſhop of *Rome*, or a general Council confirmed by him, to be infallible: God may make them infallible if he pleaſes, and if he pleaſes, he may not do it. And therefore our only Enquiry here, is, what God has done? And this can be known only by Revelation recorded in the ſacred Scriptures of Truth.

[u] Page 54.

Whether theſe holy Books will ſupport the high Pretences of Catholiciſm and Infallibility in the Church of *Rome*, I have endeavoured to ſhew in this long Chapter, and do now ſubmit it to the Judgment of the impartial Reader.——As the Caſe appears to me, the Texts adduced by them do not come up to the Purpoſe for which they are brought;-----and therefore prove nothing upon their Side of the Queſtion, but the Prejudice, Partiality, and Confidence of thoſe, who would impoſe ſuch falſe, tho' artful, Reaſoning upon the World.

To make this ſtill clearer, let me ſuppoſe, "That I was born in *Greece*, and that a "*Romiſh* Miſſionary comes and tells me, I "muſt chooſe a Church for my Guide to "Heaven.---Well, if it muſt be ſo, (ſay I) "I will chooſe our own *Greek Church*.--- "No, by no Means, (ſays he) you muſt "chooſe a Guide that cannot miſlead you, "cannot poſſibly go wrong, and that is to "be found no where, but in the Church "of *Rome*.---Why, (ſay I) what Reaſon, "or Colour of Reaſon is there for that? "What is there in the Promiſes of Chriſt, "which makes *Rome* the Seat of Infallibility, and directs me to chooſe that Church "and no other?-----Is it ſo ſaid in the holy "Scriptures?--No,(ſays he) not expreſly, but

"it

" it is by Implication and neceſſary Conſe-
" quence.——Well, (ſay I) that will do, if
" it appears, but tell me what neceſſary Con-
" ſequence, or Deduction from holy Scri-
" pture, ſhould determine me to that Choice?
" --Look, (ſays he) there are Promiſes made
" to the Church, and ye are commanded
" to *hear the Church*.----And what then?
" (ſay I) there is no Word of *Rome* in
" theſe Promiſes, or in that Command.
" Were not our Eaſtern Churches planted
" by the Apoſtles, as well as that of *Rome*,
" and ſome of them before her? Have we
" not a conſtant Succeſſion of Biſhops in
" them? Have we not four Patriarchs in
" our Communion, and you but one? For
" what imaginable Reaſon then, ſhould you
" dare to exclude our Churches from any
" Share in the Promiſes of Chriſt?----But
" (ſays he) it *belongs to the Church to inter-*
" *pret Scripture*.----So ſay I too, but it is
" the *Catholick Church*, in all Ages and in
" all Places, not the preſent *Roman*.——
" Thus (ſays he) ye ſtill deceive yourſelves
" with your own Fancies, and private Inter-
" pretations of Scripture, but great is your
" Danger if you do not believe the Church
" of *Rome*.--That's ſtrange, (ſay I) that the
" Doctrine of holy Scripture, which I fol-
" low, as it has been taught and declared by

" the

" the catholick Church of Chriſt, ſhould ſtill
" be called a private Interpretation. But pray
" ye, Sir, does the Church of *Rome* pretend
" to any new Revelations of Matter of
" Doctrine?----No, ſhe does not, but on-
" ly to declare the old Doctrines.——
" Has ſhe not the Books of the old Reve-
" lation?---Yes.----Are they not legible?---
" Yes, (ſays he) but you cannot underſtand
" them.---Why, Sir, (ſay I) let me try if
" I can, for it is only on the Authority of
" God, and for the Reverence I owe to
" him, that I believe his Word, and there-
" fore I cannot be ſatisfied till I ſee his
" Word.----What (ſays he) will you not
" believe the Church which brings you this
" Word?---I believe (ſay I) the univerſal
" Church, which has carefully conveyed
" down to me this ſacred Word, but not
" the *Roman* Church, which (in many In-
" ſtances) has attempted to corrupt, and
" alter this Word, and at laſt to ſnatch it
" quite out of my Hands. I beg you'll ex-
" cuſe me for not believing her, whom I
" have Reaſon to ſuſpect of ill Deſign, and
" I'll make my Apology, by this Simili-
" tude:

" A Man brings me a Letter from my
" Father, while I am in a foreign Country,
" directing the Courſe of my Travels, whom

" I

" I ſhould converſe with, whom I ſhould
" truſt, and how to make my Way Home.
" At the ſame Time the Man tells me, I
" need not look into the Letter itſelf, for
" he was authorized by my Father to tell
" me his Meaning. Altho' I believe he
" dealt faithfully in bringing me the true
" Letter, do you think I will truſt him for
" the Meaning of it? No, I will open it,
" if it was only to ſee, whether he had
" ſuch Authority from him, or not: For
" I remember that a former Letter from
" my Father to his elder Son then travel-
" ling, contained this remarkable Paſſage
" concerning the Bearers of it,----To the
" Law, and to the Teſtimony, if they
" ſpeak not according to this Word, it is
" becauſe there is no Light in them, *Iſaiah*
" viii. 20. Beſides, I know that if my Fa-
" ther was pleaſed to write to me about
" Matters of ſuch Importance, he would
" write in ſuch Manner that I might under-
" ſtand him, and if any Difficulties ariſe in
" Point of the Geography, or Laws of the
" Country I am in, I will take Advice of
" thoſe who are moſt fit and able to direct
" me, and not of him who brags moſt of
" his own Skill, nor of them who have a
" ſeparate Intereſt to drive. But after all,
" I muſt ſtill know what my Father would

" have

" have me to do, and I muſt know it from
" the Words of his Letter, and not from
" the Mouth of the Meſſenger only.

" Or, if the Meſſenger tells me farther,
" that he has Authority to deliver other
" Things by Word of Mouth, which I
" am equally bound to believe with what
" I find in the Letter, can any one expect
" I ſhould believe him, unleſs it appears
" from the Letter it ſelf, that my Father
" gave him ſuch Authority?---Let him va-
" pour upon his Merit, let him tell me ne-
" ver ſo much, how long he has been my
" Father's Servant, and how faithful he
" has been to him, and that never yet has
" he once miſtaken, or tranſgreſſed my Fa-
" ther's Orders, and that he has done and
" ſuffered much for him, and can produce
" a Number of Certificates from Time to
" Time of his good Behaviour; yet all
" this can bring me no Satisfaction, ſo long
" as the Letter he brings, is confeſſed to
" be my Father's own Hand-writing, and
" that it was written, and ſent of Purpoſe,
" to direct me in a Matter which he knew
" to be of the greateſt Concernment in the
" World to me; and yet that I am not allowed
" to open and read this Letter, and to judge
" or conſider of my own Matters by the
" Directions it contains. Can I imagine

" that

" that one ſo wiſe and careful, as my in-
" dulgent Father is, ſhould omit ſetting
" down in his own Letter ſuch important
" Things, and leave them to the Diſcretion
" of one, who may either miſtake his Mean-
" ing, or have ſome Jobs to carry on, dif-
" ferent from my real Intereſt or Safety.---
" It cannot be, and therefore all the fair
" Pretences in the World, ſhall never make
" me believe any Thing to be his Mind
" and Will, as neceſſary for me to do, in
" a Matter which ſo much relates to my
" Welfare, but what I find under his own
" Hand.

" I ſee (ſays the Miſſionary) you are
" learned and wiſe in your own Conceit,
" and have been taught all the idle, frothy
" Tales, the wretched Stuff of *Hereticks*,
" who are no better than Heathens and
" Publicans, ſo long as they refuſe to *hear*
" *the Church*; you underſtand the Scriptures
" in one Way, the Church interpretes them
" in another: *Who ſhall be Judge?*

" Fair and ſoftly, Sir, (ſay I) bring out
" your ſtrongeſt Arguments, but do not i-
" magine I am to be bullied into Submiſ-
" ſion, or convinced only by the bluſtering
" Noiſe of bad Names, and hard Words,
" I do not diſclaim the Judgment, and juſt
" Authority of the Catholick Church, be-

" cauſe I find her in the ancient Creeds,
" and in my Father's Letter; but I ſuſpect
" that of the *Roman* Church, becauſe I
" find her in neither of them. Neither am
" I afraid of your (ſuppoſed) knotty Queſti-
" on, *Who ſhall be Judge?* To let you ſee
" I am not, I will anſwer it diſtinctly in
" the following Particulars:

" 1*ſt*, That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the on-
" ly Head of his whole Church, is the great
" and only univerſal Judge of the World,
" who will paſs Sentence upon you and
" me at the laſt Day, whether we will or
" not.

" 2*dly*, That as the Sentence of that
" great Day will proceed upon *what we*
" *have done in the Body*, whether it be good
" or evil; and as we muſt then give an Ac-
" count of our own Actions, and every
" Man muſt anſwer for himſelf, and not
" another; and as it will be no Apolo-
" gy then, that *we have followed a Multi-*
" *tude to Evil, and obeyed Men more than*
" *God*; as this (I ſay) is the Caſe, it would
" ſeem not unreaſonable that we ſhould
" judge for ourſelves, and that what will
" be the Subject of our Sentence then,
" ſhould be the Subject of our *Choice* now.
" Allow me to illuſtrate this by putting a
" Caſe, wherein it will be admitted, we muſt

" judge

" judge for ourſelves, and not ſubmit to " Numbers or Power.——It is a Caſe " which has happened, and may happen " again, and is not remote from the pre- " ſent Purpoſe, as it is ſtrictly the Caſe be- " tween the Church of *Rome* and her Si- " ſter-Churches.----It is this.----Suppoſe a " foreign Prince invades and conquers a " Kingdom, and takes upon himſelf the " excluſive Privilege of interpreting the old " Laws of that Kingdom, and of making " new Ones, and all with Deſign to exclude " the rightful Prince from the Poſſeſſion " of his own Kingdom, and the Exerciſe " of his juſt Authority; would not (in that " Caſe) every loyal Subject have Title to " *judge for himſelf* of the Perſon to whom " his Allegiance is due?

" But, 3*dly*, We do not decline a reaſon- " able Guidance and Judgment, even in " *this World*, we only deſire our Judges " may be juſt, and ſuch as God hath ap- " pointed to that Office. If you of the " *Roman* Church will needs judge for us, " ſhew your Credentials, your Warrant, " for we will not take your bare Word for " it: If you pretend you have a divine " Commiſſion for that Effect, pray ye, ex- " hibit it, for we will not be put off with " Pretences.——Nay, we farther deſire to

" know, *who ſhall be Judge of this Pre-*
" *tence?* We have no Reaſon to truſt you,
" and ye will not truſt us; ſo here we
" ſtop at once, unleſs the Commiſſion be
" produced, which impowers you to judge,
" who challenge ſuch Authority over our
" Judgment. And farther ſtill, let me tell
" you, Sir, that a general, indefinite, ob-
" ſcure Commiſſion, (which may extend
" to all other Guides in the Church as well
" as to you) will by no Means be deemed
" ſufficient: Let us ſee whom Chriſt has
" appointed in his own Words, and we
" will inſtantly ſubmit, for we look on him
" as ſupreme Judge, and Lawgiver to his
" Church; and if he has thought fit to ap-
" point any one Man, or Church, to be this
" *ſupreme infallible Judge*, we have done.
" But we earneſtly deſire to know, where
" ſuch Appointment is? There appears in
" Scripture no Patent to you, who claim
" this high Prerogative; your Church of
" *Rome* is not named in any Prophecy or
" Promiſe in the Old or New Teſtament,
" and ſhe pretends to no later Revelation, or
" any new Commiſſion from Heaven for
" it.

" You ſee now, we are not puzzled to
" anſwer your Queſtion, *Who ſhall be Judge?*
" But we deſire to be well ſatisfied about it;

" and

" and for that Effect, we desire to see his " Warrant and Commission from the So- " vereign Lord of the Church, that we " may know, not only, who hath appointed " him, but *who he is?* Whether the Pope " in his Chair, or a general Council, *&c.*

" This is very material for us to know, " and therefore not impertinent to ask, " since even you of the *Roman* Communion, " are not yet agreed among yourselves a- " bout this Point. You very well know, " (though perhaps you'd be content I did " not) that not yet seventy Years ago, the " Assembly of the Clergy of *France* so- " lemnly declared, That they did not be- " lieve the Pope's Judgment (or Sentence) " to be infallible[x]; and that in the same " Year, the Clergy of *Hungary* rejected " and censured this Declaration, as absurd " and detestable.-----They forbid any to " read, hold or teach that Doctrine, and " own the Pope to be the only infallible " Judge of Controversies[y]; that a Doctor " of the *Sorbon*, in his Notes on the *Hun-* " *garian* Censure, calls this, *the new Here-* " *sy of the Jesuits*[z]: That on the other " Side, large Volumes have been printed to

" prove,

[x] Declaratio Cler. Gallican. Prop. iv. ann. 1682.
[y] Censura Hungarica, 24 Octobris, 1682.
[z] Tractat. de libertate Eccles. Gallican. *Leodii*, 1684.

" prove, *that the Right of judging infalli-*
" *bly belongs only to the Pope* [a]; and that
" later than all theſe, another learned Do-
" ctor of the *Sorbon* has written a Book to
" prove, *not only that the Pope's Judgment*
" *is not* irreformable, (*and therefore not in-*
" *fallible*) *but that it is a dangerous Thing*
" *to believe it ſo, and that no Man ought to*
" *do it, unleſs infallible Proof is brought of*
" *it:* And he proves at large, *that not ſo*
" *much as* probable Evidence *can be brought*
" *for it, either from Scripture or Tradition* [b].

" And now, Sir, let me ask in my Turn,
" *Who is this Judge?* Is the Pope this in-
" fallible Decider of Controverſies, or not?
" I deſire a direct Anſwer, either Yes, or
" No, as you pleaſe, that I may know
" who is the Judge, to whoſe Sentence I
" am obliged (in Conſcience and Duty) to
" ſubmit; for it is unreaſonable in you, to
" inſiſt for my Submiſſion to an *unerring*
" *Guide*, an *infallible Judge* of Controver-
" ſies, when you neither ſhew his Com-
" miſſion, or ſo much as name him, or tell
" who he is.

" But after all, Sir, that you may not
" think

[a] Regale ſacerdotium Romano Pontifici aſſertum, auctore Eugenio Lombardo, 1684.

[b] De antiqua Eccleſiæ diſciplina, Diſſert. 5. auctore Lud. Ellies Du Pin, 1686.

" think I avoid a fair Trial, or am unwil-
" ling to have the Cauſe in diſpute between
" us, heard and determined according to
" Truth and Equity; I do hereby declare
" and promiſe, that I will ſubmit to the
" Deciſion of the catholick or univerſal
" Church of Chriſt: Whatever appears to
" have been her Sentiments in this Matter,
" eſpecially in the earlieſt and beſt Times,
" when they were neareſt to the Fountain
" Head, and before the Streams had become
" muddy, that ſhall determine me. And
" whether theſe holy Men, the great Lights
" of the ancient Church, and many of them
" Martyrs for the Chriſtian Faith, whe-
" ther they did believe, or teach, the *In-*
" *fallibility of the Church of Rome*, ſhall be
" the Subject of our Enquiry afterwards."
In the mean time I will conclude this Conference, with my humble Addreſs to the great *Judge of the World*, the God who will infallibly pronounce Sentence upon you and me, at the laſt Day, and who (to our great Conſolation) is a God of Mercy, as well as of Truth, " That it would pleaſe
" him to direct you and me, and all Man-
" kind, in the Knowledge of the Truth,
" and in the Practice of Righteouſneſs;
" and may his Holy Spirit enable us, in
" whatever we think, or ſpeak, or do, or
" ſuffer,

" ſuffer, to ſeek his Honour and Glory a-
" bove all things, that ſo we may be finally
" received into that bleſſed Region, where
" all Miſtakes and Animoſities ſhall ceaſe,
" and we ſhall unite in loving and praiſing
" him for ever, through the Merits of Jeſus
" Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*"

CHAP. IV.

In which our Author's Citations from the Fathers, are examined, and found to have no Relation to his Argument, and theſe great and holy Men, are reſcued from the Imputation he would fix upon them, of maintaining the Infallibility of the Church of Rome.

HAving in the preceeding Chapter laid before the Reader the true and genuine Senſe of theſe ſeveral Texts of holy Scripture, which have been alledged (by the Authors I am conſidering) for Proof of Infallibility in the *Roman* Church, and having freed them from thoſe falſe and corrupt Gloſſes, which they, and other *Romaniſts*, have put upon them, to ſeduce Men into their Communion; I proceed now (by divine Aid) to the like plain and impartial Examination of the Authorities which are alledged

alledged from the ancient Fathers of the Church, in order to eſtabliſh, and ſupport the ſame darling Scheme of Infallibility in the Church of *Rome*: And I have reaſon to believe, that as the holy Scriptures (thoſe Fountains of Truth and ſaving Knowledge) have given no Countenance to it, ſo neither will the Writers of the earlieſt Ages, to whom it was abſolutely unknown. We are always deſirous to appeal to them, and it is from their Sentiments and Practice (in conformity to the ſacred Writings, of which they are the beſt Interpreters) that we hold and profeſs the Truth, in Oppoſition to all Errors, Innovations and Additions, which the *Roman* Church has made to that holy Faith, which was once delivered to the Saints.

That our Author's Argument from the Fathers may appear to the beſt Advantage, and in its utmoſt Strength, I will firſt ſet down his Authorities all together, and then, after ſome general Remarks upon them, will examine them ſeparately.

" The ſame Truth (ſays the Author of " the Manuſcript) is clearly taught by the " holy Fathers from the Beginning. St. *Ire-* " *næus* Biſhop and Martyr in the Age after " the Apoſtles, writes thus, *lib.* 3. *de hæreſ.* " *c.* 4. Truth is not to be ſought from o-

" thers,

" thers, which you may have eaſily from
" the Church, with which the Apoſtles
" have moſt fully depoſited all Truth; that
" whoſoever deſires it, may have from her
" the Water of Life; for ſhe is the Gate
" of Life: But all the reſt (all other Sects)
" are Thieves and Robbers; for which
" Reaſon we muſt avoid them: But the
" Things which are of the Church, we
" muſt with the greateſt Diligence love, and
" lay hold of her Tradition of the Truth.
" All this could not be ſaid of a Church
" which could lead her Children into Er-
" ror: She has all Truth depoſited with
" her; it is eaſy to have this Truth from
" her and from her only; it is not to be
" ſought, nor can it be found amongſt
" thoſe, that are ſeparated from her. The
" ſame Father *lib.* 3. *c.* 40. tells us, that
" where the Church is, there is the Spirit;
" and where the Spirit of God is, there is
" the Church and all Grace: Now the Spi-
" rit is Truth, *&c.* whence it follows, that
" the Church cannot fall into pernicious
" Errors, ſeeing the Spirit of Truth and all
" Grace is always where the Church is.

" *Tertullian* who lived ſoon after St. *Ire-*
" *næus* in *lib. de Præſcript. c.* 28. is no leſs
" plain for the unerring Authority of the
" Church, where he teaches that to attribute

" an

" an Error to the Church, is to accuſe the
" Holy Ghoſt himſelf. Let us ſuppoſe, ſays
" he, that all Churches have erred, that the
" Apoſtle was miſtaken in his Teſtimony,
" that the Holy Ghoſt has had a Regard
" to none to lead it into Truth, though he
" was for this Reaſon ſent by Chriſt, for
" this Reaſon begged of the Father that he
" might be the Teacher of Truth. Let us
" ſuppoſe that this Steward of God, this
" Vicar of Chriſt, has neglected his Duty,
" (which is not poſſible) ſuffering the
" Churches to underſtand wrong, and be-
" lieve wrong what he taught to the A-
" poſtles. Is there any Likelihood that ſo
" many ſhould all err in the ſame Faith,
" *&c.* Where we ſee that Antiquity under-
" ſtood the Promiſes of Chriſt, St. *John*
" xiv. 16, 17, 26, *&c.* and xvi. 13. of the
" Holy Ghoſt abiding with the Church for
" ever, and teaching her all Truth.

" St. *Cyprian*, one of the greateſt Biſhops
" of the third Age, and a Martyr, *lib. Of*
" *the Unity of the Church*, writes thus:
" The Church enlightened by the Lord,
" ſpreads her Rays through the whole
" World; yet it is but one Light which
" is thus diffuſed. By her Fertility ſhe
" ſtretches out her Branches over all the
" Earth, and every Place is watered by her

" copious Streams: Yet there is but one " Head, and one Source, one Mother, rich " in her numerous Offspring: By her Fruit- " fulneſs we are born, with her Milk we " are nouriſhed, and we are enlivened by " her Spirit: The Spouſe of Chriſt cannot " play the Adultereſs; ſhe is uncorrupt; " ſhe is chaſte; ſhe knows but one Houſe, " and with a pure Modeſty maintains the " Sanctity of one Bedchamber. So he. " Now could all this be ſaid of a Church " capable of manifold Corruptions, and, " inſtead of continuing the pure Spouſe of " Chriſt, of becoming the Whore of *Ba-* " *bylon?* The ſame Father, *Epiſt.* 55. tells " us, that the Church never departeth from " that which ſhe once hath learned; and if " ſo, ſhe never departs from the Faith once " delivered to the Saints.

" The Church of Chriſt, according to " *Lactantius*, (who lived moſtly in the third " Age) *lib* 4. *Inſtit*, is the Fountain of " Truth, the Houſe of Faith, the Temple " of God. According to St. *Athanaſius*, " *Tract. adv. hæreſ.* ſhe is the perfect Dove, " ſhe holds the Helm of the pure and or- " thodox Faith, ſhe is the Rock that breaks " all the Waves of Hereſy. And according " to St. *Pacian* (a holy Biſhop of the fourth " Age) *epiſt*, ſhe is a ſpotleſs Virgin. So

" in

" in the Judgment of theſe Fathers ſhe
" cannot be conquered or corrupted by Er-
" ror.

" St. *Auguſtine* in the 5th Age, in *Pſal.* 57.
" ſays, that it is in the Church's Womb that
" Truth remains. Whoſoever is ſeparated
" from the Womb of the Church, muſt of
" Neceſſity ſpeak Lies. I ſay, he muſt ne-
" ceſſarily ſpeak Lies, who refuſes to be
" conceived, or being conceived, has been
" thrown out by the Mother. By which
" Words of this great Father, we are aſſu-
" red, that the Womb of the Church is e-
" ver the Seat of Truth, and that whoſo-
" ever goes aſtray from this Womb, muſt
" of Neceſſity fall into Errors and Lies;
" which could not be true, if the Church
" herſelf could be guilty of Lies and Er-
" rors. In the ſame Place he adds, it may
" be that a Man can lie, but it cannot be
" that Truth can lie: From the Mouth of
" Truth I have the Knowledge of Chriſt,
" who is Truth itſelf: From the Mouth of
" Truth I have the Knowledge of the
" Church, Partaker of Truth: Where to
" fallible Men he oppoſes Chriſt, who is
" Truth by Eſſence; and to his Church,
" which is Truth by Participation. The
" ſame Father (*Epiſt.* 118.) ſays, that if
" the whole Church through the World

" practiſe

" practiſe any of theſe Things; it is moſt " inſolent Madneſs to diſpute whether that " ought to be practiſed or not. Now, if it be " inſolent Madneſs to condemn the univer- " ſal Church in Matters of Diſcipline, what " muſt it be reckoned to impeach the whole " Church of Errors in Faith?

" *Vincentius Lirinenſis*, in his excellent " Work againſt all Hereſies *Common. cap.* " 32. ſays, the Church of Chriſt is a moſt " diligent and faithful Preſerver of Do- " ctrines depoſited with her, never changes " any thing in them: She retrenches no- " thing, ſhe adds nothing; ſhe neither " parts with what is neceſſary, nor takes " up what is ſuperfluous: She neither lo- " ſes what is her own, nor uſurps what is " not her own. It is clear this cannot be " ſaid of the Church, unleſs ſhe be infal- " lible [c].

The Author of the *Shorteſt Way* [d] has cited the ſame Fathers, (at leaſt three of them) and the ſame Teſtimonies from them; and has brought no more (that I remember) but one from St. *Cyril* of *Alexandria*, which, in my Opinion, he had as well have let alone: But that he may have no Ground to

[c] Author of the Manuſcript, parag. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14.
[d] Shorteſt Way, Part 1. p. 34 to 39.

to complain of unfair Dealing, I ſhall tranſcribe it too, as it ſtands in his 36th Page.

" St. *Cyril* of *Alexandria*, ſays he, (*dial. de Trin. lib* 4.) writes thus,---He gave the " Name of the *Rock* to nothing elſe but the " unſhaken and conſtant Faith of the Di- " ſciple, on which the Church of Chriſt is " ſo ſettled and eſtabliſhed as never to fall, " but to bear up againſt the Gates of Hell, " and ſo to remain for ever."

Here their whole Artillery is planted at once againſt us; but when the Battery is unmasked, it will appear a very harmleſs, inoffenſive one, and that our Danger is not equal to the Alarm."

Theſe Authorities do indeed prove what is not (nor ever was) denied by any wiſe Proteſtant, that is, the Indefectiblity, or perpetual Duration and Stability of the catholick Church, which St. *Cyril* and *Vincentius* here call the *Church of Chriſt*, and others, ſimply the *Church*; that ſhe is ſo well eſtabliſhed upon the Rock, which St. *Peter* confeſſed, as never to fall, but to remain for ever firm, and unſhaken againſt the Gates of Hell.———We ſtedfaſtly believe all this, we adore and bleſs our God and Saviour for his gracious Promiſe of Protection, and Perpetuity to his Church, and do not in the leaſt doubt but he will make it good, ſo as never, to the World's End,

End, ſhall there be wanting a Society of Men profeſſing the Chriſtian Faith, and confeſſing with St. *Peter*, " that Jeſus is " the Chriſt the Son of the living God."

But what Connexion has all this with the Subject in Diſpute? There is no Mention of *Rome* in all theſe eight Quotations; nor is any Reaſon ſhewed to convince us, that when the Church of Chriſt is mentioned, and glorious things ſaid of her, the Church of *Rome*, and no other, is to be underſtood. If theſe holy Fathers meant ſo, why did they not name her? why did they not ſpeak the Language of Pope *Pius* IV. and put *Roman* into the Creed?—— This, and nothing ſhort of this, would have brought them to ſpeak up to the Purpoſe for which theſe learned Authors have called them forth: But they had not then ſo learned Chriſt, *Roman Catholick* was no more the Stile of their Times, than *Aſian*, *Greek*, or *African Catholick*; nor had it ever entered into their Minds, that a Part was the Whole of a Thing, or that *Roman* and *Catholick* were equivalent Terms, and ſignified the ſame.

In a former Part of this little Treatiſe, I tranſlated a Paragragh from a very learned Man of the *Romiſh* Communion, in the 15th Century (*Alphonſus Toſtatus* Biſhop of

of *Avila* in *Spain*) which will clear up this Matter, and confirm the general Remark I have made on theſe Authorities from the Fathers, as it ſhews, that even in his Time they had not learned to blend and confound the *Catholick* with the *Roman* Church, ſo as when the one is mentioned, the other is always to be underſtood.----No ſuch thing.---" The catholick Church (ſays he) never " erreth, becauſe it never errs altogether: " But the *Latin* (or *Roman*) *Church is not* " *the Catholick Church, only a certain Part* " *of it.* Therefore though all of her ſhould " err, yet the Catholick Church would not " err, becauſe the Catholick Church would " remain in thoſe Parts which do not err, " whether they are greater or leſs, more " or fewer than thoſe which do [e]."

This ſhort Abridgment contains the Sum and Subſtance of all theſe eight Quotations from the Fathers. The two Gentlemen which have collected them, do not contend, that St. *Irenæus*, or St. *Cyril*, or any of thoſe between, have ſaid more, than that " the Church never errs;" and *Toſtatus* ſays no leſs, only with this Odds, that *Toſtatus* ſpeaks out what (it is very probable) theſe ancient Fathers thought, *viz.* that the *La-*

[e] Toſt. Abulenſ. præfat. in Matth. quæſt. 4 & 13. prol. 2,

tin or *Roman* Church is not the Catholick Church.

Here I foreſee I muſt be ſtopt ſhort, and accuſed of heretical Petulancy, and Raſhneſs, in preſuming to judge of the Sentiments of thoſe venerable Fathers concerning the Matter in Queſtion.

To clear myſelf of this Charge, ſome Eclairciſſement will be neceſſary; and in order to it, I only deſire this one *poſtulatum* may be granted me, *viz.* "That a Man's "private Opinion, the real Sentiments of "his Mind, are beſt collected from his "Conduct, the Tenor of his Life and "Practice."

This (I humbly think) will not be denied me, as it is commonly allowed in other Inſtances: If a Man lives in Contradiction and Repugnancy to the Rules of the Goſpel, we pronounce without Scruple or Heſitation that this Man does not believe the Goſpel as he ought.——And whoever takes the Trouble to read this little Eſſay of mine, and compare it with the Works of theſe learned Gentlemen I am anſwering, will inſtantly conclude, that they are *Roman* Catholicks, and I a Proteſtant, as they argue ſtrenuouſly for, and I (as well as I can) againſt the Infallibility, and univerſal

niverſal Juriſdiction of the Biſhop and Church of *Rome*.

Juſt ſo, if it ſhall appear from the Writings and the Hiſtory of St. *Irenæus*, and the other Fathers, here forced into the Field againſt us, that they had no Regard, and paid no implicite Submiſſion or Obedience to the Infallibility or ſupreme Authority of the Biſhop of *Rome*, but ſometimes complained of his Proceedings, admoniſhed, contradicted, and diſobeyed him; or (if you will) oppoſed and proteſted againſt his Meaſures;----then I do poſitively inſiſt, that I have hit the Mark, and diſcovered their real Sentiments, which, in the preſent Queſtion, were on my Side, and not on that of my Adverſaries.

To make this Point clear and certain, I ſhall take theſe Authorities ſeparately, and examine them one by one: But, that the Reader may not be alarmed, as if I was undertaking a very tedious Task, I promiſe him that I will endeavour to make this Chapter ſhorter than the preceeding one.

As I write only for the Uſe and Benefit of the leſs learned Reader, or ſuch as have no Acceſs to better Aſſiſtance, it is not neceſſary to inſiſt ſo long on this Argument, as on the former. They have (bleſſed be God for it) the holy Scriptures

in their Poſſeſſion, and may have Recourſe to them when they pleaſe; and therefore I judged it my Duty, to treat more at large of the Texts alledged from them, in Support of the *Romiſh* Cauſe, to ſet them in the ſtrongeſt Light, and fully to reſcue them from thoſe artificial Strainings and falſe Gloſſes, which theſe Gentlemen would put upon them.

But ordinary Readers have not ſo eaſy Acceſs to the Writings of the Fathers, nor could conſult them, if they had; For this Reaſon I am reſolved to avoid all ſuch unneceſſary, long Citations from them, as might perhaps carry ſome Shew of Learning, without conveying any Profit to them, for whoſe Sake I write. But as for others who have Capacity, and Oportunities to ſatisfy themſelves at the Fountain, if they will pleaſe to look into the Books and Places referred to at the Foot of each Page, or the End of each Section, they will find the Facts advanced by me, in that Page or Section properly vouched.

§ I. St. *Irenæus* (with whom theſe Authors begin their Proof) was Biſhop of *Lyons*, in the ſecond Century, and ſuffered Martyrdom in the third Century under the Emperor *Severus*, *anno* 202 or 203.—

He

He was the Diſciple of St. *Polycarp*, as he had been of St. *John* the Evangeliſt, and conſequently was as likely as any one of his Time, to know what was truly primitive and apoſtolical; and, as he was a Man of Learning, exemplary Holineſs, and uncommon Worth, great Regard is due to his Teſtimony.

In his Books referred to by our Author, he has indeed the Words cited, "that in "the Church is the Truth, the Water of "Life, the Gate of Life, the Spirit, *&c.*" All this is true, if underſtood as he meant it, of the Catholick Church of Chriſt, but not if reſtricted and applied to any one particular Church, farther than as that particular Church is a Part of this one great Body.

That St. *Irenæus* meant it thus, appears from thoſe very Books of his, where he mentions the Doctrine delivered by the Church founded by the Apoſtles, Prophets and Evangeliſts, evidently referring to that Text of St. *Paul* to the *Epheſians*, which has been conſidered in the 7th Section of the former Chapter.

But, to give Weight to theſe Gentlemens Argument, and bring it to conclude any thing to their Purpoſe, we muſt underſtand all this to be meant of the Church of *Rome*, and no other: Whether St. *Irenæus* meant it

ſo,

ſo, whether he had any extraordinary Bias to that Church, and gave her a Preference to, and Power over other Churches, will appear from the following ſhort Narrative of a memorable Controverſy in his Time, and of the Part he acted in it.

About the Middle of the ſecond Century, a Diſpute began to turn warm between the Eaſtern and Weſtern Biſhops, about the Celebration of *Eaſter*, the former keeping that Solemnity on the 14th Day of the Moon in the firſt Month, [*March*] on what Day ſoever of the Week it happened, and the latter putting it off 'till the *Sunday* following.

In the Pontificate of *Anicetus*, St. *Polycarp*, Biſhop of *Smyrna*, came to *Rome*, with a View to adjuſt this Difference: Tho' neither of theſe two Biſhops would relinquiſh his own Opinion, and the Practice of his Church, yet they parted good Friends, reſolving not to break Communion, but to maintain Peace and Charity. *Soter* and *Eleutherius* (Succeſſors of *Anicetus*) carried the Matter ſoftly too, and made no Breach with the *Quartodecimans*. But

Victor (a Man of leſs Temper) not ſatisfied with what his Predeceſſors had done, took upon him to *impoſe the* Roman *Cuſtom* on all the Churches which followed

the

the contrary Practice. In this bold Attempt (which we may call the first Essay of *Papal Usurpation*) *Victor* succeeded very ill: His Brother Bishops then did not consider him as Christ's Vicar-general upon Earth, or Head of the universal Church, and therefore would not obey him.

Amongst the rest *Polycrates*, at that Time Bishop of *Ephesus*, (who is greatly commended by *Eusebius* and St. *Jerome*, as a Man mighty in the Scriptures, and one of the most eminent for Piety and Learning of any in the Church at that Time) peremptorily refused to relinquish the Practice of his own Church, which (he said) had been introduced by the Apostles St. *John* and St. *Philip*, and handed down to him by seven Bishops of his own Family.

Hereupon *Victor* (impatient of Contradiction) writes a Letter threatning to excommunicate him, unless he conformed to the Practice of the Church of *Rome*: *Polycrates* greatly surprized at this rough Language of his Fellow Bishop, assembles all the Bishops of the lesser *Asia*, in Council at *Ephesus*, where it was unanimously resolved, that the Practice received from their Predecessors ought not to be changed: And *Polycrates* wrote to the Bishop of *Rome*, acquainting him with this Resolution; and giving him to under-

underſtand, that as to his Menaces, he had better forbear them, ſince they had no Manner of Effect upon him or his Brethren.

Upon this *Victor* (giving Way to an impotent Paſſion) excommunicates the Churches of *Aſia*, and wrote to the other Biſhops, not commanding indeed, but exhorting them to follow his Example, and forbear communicating with their refractory Brethren in the Eaſt.

Here the Caſe is brought to a Criſis: Let us now ſee what was the Iſſue. Did the *Aſiatick* Biſhops, or thoſe others to whom *Victor* ſignified his Pleaſure, inſtantly ſubmit and comply? Did they acknowledge their Error in differing from his Holineſs and the Apoſtolick See? Did they confeſs the Pope's univerſal Headſhip, and ſovereign Authority? Or, did they conſider *Rome* as the Center of eccleſiaſtical Unity, or as "the Mother and Miſtreſs of all "Churches?" No ſuch thing; ſo far to the contrary, that not one of them followed his Example or Advice, or ſhewed the leaſt Inclination to ſecond and ſupport him in an Attempt ſo raſh, and uncharitable, but (as *Euſebius*, and other eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians tell us) they all joined in oppoſing his Meaſures, and in ſharply rebuking him as a Diſturber of the Church's Peace.

Among

Among the reſt, our *Irenæus* wrote him an excellent Letter, putting him in Mind of the Moderation of his Predeceſſors, and telling him, that though he agreed with him in the Main of the Controverſy, yet he could not approve of his cutting off whole Churches, for their Obſervance of Cuſtoms, which they had received from their Anceſtors.

Valeſius (in his Note on this Part of the Hiſtory) is of Opinion, that this was a ſynodical Letter, written or approved of by the Biſhops of *France*, conveened by St. *Irenæus*, to prevent the Miſchief with which the Church was threatened, by the Temerity of *Victor*. However that may be, it is certain that *Irenæus* wrote at the ſame Time to other Biſhops, to diſſuade them (no doubt) from joining in the pernicious Meaſures of the Biſhop of *Rome*. Accordingly this vigorous Oppoſition had its Effect, the Storm ceaſed, *Victor* was baffled in his Attempt, and the *Aſiaticks* continued in the peaceable Poſſeſſion of their ancient Practice, above 120 Years after, till the Point was determined by a leſs diſputed Authority, *i. e.* of the great Council of *Nice*.

'Tis true, that from this violent Proceeding of *Victor*, *Baronius* draws an Argument for the Pope's Supremacy, but one ſo odd and unbecoming a Man of Senſe, that he

leaves Room to ſuſpect he wrote with a View to a Cardinal's Hat. "The Pope "(ſays he) excommunicated the *Aſiaticks*, "which he would never have ventured to "do, had he not known, that he had Power "and Juriſdiction over them [f]." How eaſy is it to retort his Argument thus:---- "The *Aſiaticks* made no Account of the "Biſhop of *Rome*'s Excommunication, "which they would never have ventured to "do, had they not known that he had no "Power or Juriſdiction over them." I hope this is as good Senſe, as good Logick, and much more probable than the other.

Whoever wants to be further informed of this Matter, may conſult * *Euſebius*, *Socrates*, St. *Jerome*, *Epiphanius*, † *Du Pin*, *&c.* where he will find this is a true Repreſentation of the Caſe; and if it is, I think 'tis impoſſible to believe, that the Infallibility, or Supremacy of the Biſhop or Church of *Rome*, was known or ſubmitted to in the ſecond Century; and I will leave the Reader to judge for himſelf, whether, not *Irenæus* only, but all the other Biſhops Eaſtern and Weſtern

[f] Bar. ad ann. 198. n. 10.

* Euſeb. l. 5. c. 20. 23, 4, 5, 8. Idem de vit. Conſt. l. 3. c. 18. Socrat. l. 5. c. 21, 22. Epiph. hær. 70. c. 10. Hier. vir. ill. 38. 45.

† Du Pin. eccleſ. hiſt. v. 1. p. 58. *&c.*

Weſtern of that Time, did not behave more like good Proteſtants than good Papiſts, in this Queſtion?

For if the Pope's *vicariatus generalis*, his univerſal Juriſdiction, and Right to decide Controverſies infallibly, were true Doctrines at that Time, (and if they were not true then, they could not be ſince) it is plain that St. *Irenæus*, and all thoſe Biſhops and holy Men, who joined in the Oppoſition to *Victor*, and deſpiſed his Cenſures, were Rebels and Schiſmaticks, and no better than Heathens and Publicans, in that they refuſed *to hear the Church*.

Upon the whole, let the impartial Reader determine, whether, when St. *Irenæus* ſpeaks of the Church founded by the Apoſtles, Prophets and Evangeliſts, he meant the Church of *Rome*, and none other? and whether my two learned Adverſaries did wiſely, in ſetting this excellent Biſhop, and Martyr, in the Front of their Authorities?

It were eaſy to collect from the Writings of this ancient Father ſome other Things, wherein he differed from the Doctrine and Practice of the preſent *Roman* Church, particularly as to the holy Euchariſt and Communion in both Kinds.----But this would run my Eſſay to undue Length, and is not neceſſary, as his Sentiments upon the Point

in Queſtion, are (I humbly think) evident enough, from what is already ſaid.

§ II. *Tertullian* is the next of the ancient Writers dragg'd in here, to give Evidence of the univerſal Authority of the *Roman* Church, a Church by which he thought himſelf but ill uſed; and of the Infallibility of a Pope, of whom he complains, for ſuffering himſelf to be impoſed upon by that crafty Heretick *Praxeas* [g].

Tertullian was born in *Africa*, perhaps at *Carthage*; was a Prieſt of the Catholick Church, before he turned *Montaniſt*; and from two Books, which (in the Decline of Life) he wrote to his Wife, it ſeems very probable that he was a married Prieſt, which the preſent *Roman* Church would think no ſmall Blemiſh in the Character of any of her Clergy.

That his Book *de præſcription.* (to which the Author of the Manuſcript ſends us for his Teſtimony in this Cauſe) was written after he had lapſed into the Errors of *Montanus*, is agreed by very learned Criticks, both *Romiſh* and Proteſtant, I mean *Du Pin* and *Cave*: So that the Author of the Manuſcript has ſuffered his Zeal to boil over,

[g] Tert. in Prax. c. 1. p. 405.

over, when he would bring a profeſſed Heretick to ſuport the Doctrine of (according to him) the catholick Church.

However, as this Book *of Preſcription* is a wiſe good one, and (though written after *Tertullian* had made a falſe Step, from which he never recovered himſelf) yet contains nothing but what may be underſtood in a ſound catholick Senſe, I will take no Advantage of my Author's napping, but conſider the Book itſelf, with the Way of reaſoning in it. I cannot find how to lay this before the Reader, in a Way leſs liable to Exception, than by tranſcribing a few Lines from the learned *Du Pin*, in his Abſtract of *Tertullian*'s Works [h]. "This Book (ſays "he) is entituled *of Preſcriptions*, or rather "*Preſcription againſt all Hereſies*, becauſe "herein he ſhews that their Doctrine is not "to be admitted, by Reaſon of its Novelty. Before he enters upon this Matter, "he endeavours to obviate the Scandal of "thoſe who admire, how there could be "any Hereſies in the World, how they "could have been ſo great and ſo powerful, "and how it comes to paſs, that ſo many "conſiderable Perſons in the Church have "been ſeduced to embrace them, by ſhew-

"ing

[h] Eccleſ. hiſt. v. 1. p. 77.

" ing that Hereſies have been foretold, that " they are neceſſary for the Trial of our " Faith, and that we muſt not judge of " Faith by Perſons, but of Perſons by their " Faith".---After having given this neceſſary Caution, he lays down the firſt Principle of Preſcription.---" We are not allowed " (ſays he) to introduce any Thing that is " new into Religion, nor to uſe by our- " ſelves what another has invented: We " have the Apoſtles of our Lord for Foun- " ders, who were not themſelves the Inven- " tors and Authors of what they have left " us, but they have faithfully taught the " World, the Doctrine which they receiv- " ed from Jeſus Chriſt. Hereſies have riſen " from Philoſophy and human Wiſdom, " which are quite different from the Spirit of " Chriſtianity. We are not allowed to en- " tertain our Curioſity, nor to enquire after " any Thing that is beyond what has been " taught by Jeſus Chriſt and his Go- " ſpel. *Nobis curioſitate non opus eſt poſt* " *Chriſtum Jeſum, nec inquiſitione poſt e-* " *vangelium.*"

To the ſame Purpoſe let me add a Sentence in his Book againſt *Praxeas*, [i] where he lays it down as a Rule, a Principle by which

[i] Tert. in Prax. c. 1. p. 405.

which all Hereſies may be tried and condemned. " *Id eſſe verum, quodcunque pri-*
" *mum, id eſſe adulterum, quodcunque poſteri-*
" *us. i. e.* Whatever is firſt (or oldeſt in
" Chriſtianity) is true, but whatever is of
" later Date, is not ſo."

Does not *Tertullian* here argue like a Proteſtant, when inſtead of Recourſe to an infallible Judge at *Rome*, he ſends us to the ſacred Scriptures, to Jeſus Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, for the Trial and Condemnation of Hereſy? I will be bold to ſay, that if the twelve new Articles added to the ancient Creed by *Pius* IV. and his *Tridentine* Synod, are duly tried by this Touchſtone, they will all be found falſe and forged Articles of Faith.

But not to inſiſt further on Generals, let us conſider what *Tertullian* has advanced in the Paſſage referred to.---" He ſays, the Ho-
" ly Ghoſt was ſent by Chriſt, and begg'd
" of the Father, to be a Teacher of Truth.
" (This is acknowledged.) He ſays, the Ho-
" ly Ghoſt, this Vicar of Chriſt, could not
" poſſibly neglect his Office,----(this alſo is
" acknowledged;) from which he concludes,
" that there is no Likelihood, that all
" Churches ſhould err."-----All this is acknowledged, ſo that we have no Diſpute with *Tertullian* on this Subject.

But

But what is all this to the Point in Queſtion? What Advantage can accrue to the Church of *Rome* from this Quotation, more than to any other particular Church upon Earth? For, when our Author's Argument is put into Form, the Amount of it is no more than this.---" The Churches of Chriſt " in *Tertullian*'s Time, had not all erred, " nor was it likely they would all err.---- " Therefore the Church of *Rome* is certain- " ly and conſtantly infallible."

To ſhew that this was not *Tertullian*'s Meaning, and that he never dreamed that any ſuch Inference could be made from his Words, I will ſubjoin a little of his Hiſtory.

Victor, Biſhop of *Rome*, (whom I mentioned in the former Section, not much to his Honour) had owned and approved the prophetick Spirit of *Montanus*, and his two Propheteſſes, *Priſca* and *Maxemilla*; for the ſame *Tertullian* (who was his Contemporary) tells us in expreſs Terms [k], " That " he received their Prophecies, and that " upon receiving them, he gave Letters of " Peace to the Churches of *Aſia* and *Phry-* " *gia*; but that one *Praxeas*, juſt come from " thoſe Parts, gave him a falſe Account of " thoſe

[k] Tert. loc. ſupra citato.

" thoſe Prophets and their Churches, and " remonſtrating, that by approving them, " he condemned his Predeceſſors, prevailed " upon him to revoke the Letters, which " he had already written in their Behalf."

Here is a Biſhop of *Rome* (whom that Church has placed among the Saints) plainly changing Sides, and altering his Opinion even in Matters of Faith. Was he infallibly right on both Sides of the Queſtion? or could *Tertullian* think him ſo, when he complains of the Deceit by which he was impoſed upon? One would imagine Infallibility would ſhut the Door againſt all Impoſitions.

If it be ſaid, that *Tertullian*, now a *Montaniſt*, a Heretick, belies his Holineſs in this Particular, be it ſo.--But why ſhould Proteſtants be knocked down with the Authority of a Liar, a Heretick? Is he more to be relied on in Matters of Doctrine, than in Matters of Fact? Though really this falſe Step of *Victor* ſtands upon other Authority than that of *Tertullian*, and is not denied by the Learned in the Church of *Rome* at this Day.

Baronius and *Bellarmine* (the two great Advocates for papal Privileges) are greatly puzzled how to bring *Victor* out of this Scrape; they own that the Pope was deceiv-

ed, but for all that they will not give up his Infallibility.------" It is no new Thing " (ſays *Baronius*[l]) nor what ought to cauſe " in us the leaſt Surprize, that a Pope ſhould " be over-reached by Impoſtors."---No, a Pope over-reached in Matters of Faith! What then becomes of Infallibility? or what is the Uſe of it?

" The *Montaniſts* (ſays *Bellarmine*[m]) " craftily concealed from the Pope what " was erroneous and heretical in their Pro- " phecies, ſo that he diſcovering nothing " in their Doctrine, repugnant to that of the " Church, believed that they had been un- " juſtly accuſed to, and comdemned by his " Predeceſſors."---Finely argued! St. *Victor* it ſeems muſt be cleared at any Rate, tho' at the Expence of his Predeceſſors: For if *Victor* believed that the *Montaniſts* had been unjuſtly condemned by his Predeceſſors, he could not believe that theſe Predeceſſors were infallible; ſo that, in every Light, this Fact overſets the pretended Infallibility. Beſides, if the Pope's Infallibility depends on a right Information, and neither he nor we can know, whether he has been rightly informed or not, his Infallibility is thereby rendered quite uſeleſs, and not worth contending

[l] Bar. ad ann. 73. n. 4.
[m] Bell. de ſum. Pont. l. 4. c. 8.

tending for, ſince in every particular Caſe, we may doubt (and that Doubt cannot be removed) whether the Information upon which he acts, was right or no.

I ſhall cloſe this Section with a Paſſage from the celebrated Dr. *Du Pin*, where he gives an Account of the Genius and Stile of *Tertullian*, and of the Judgment that ought to be paſſed upon his Writings [n]. "He was of a very quick and ſprightly "Temper, (ſays he) but had not all that "Exactneſs and Clearneſs that might have "been wiſhed: There is very often more "of Glittering than Solidity in his Reaſon-"ings; he rather ſtrikes and dazzles, by "his bold Expreſſions, than convinces by "the Force of his Arguments: His Excel-"lency conſiſted in Satyr, his Jeſts are ve-"ry ingenious and biting: He attacked his "Adverſaries very cunningly, and over-"threw them by a Multitude of Reaſons; "or, if he does not perſuade by his Rea-"ſonings, he at leaſt forces Conſent, by "that pompous Way of Expreſſion, where-"by he ſets them off, *&c.*"

This is a true Portrait of the "Author "of the *Shorteſt Way* to end Diſputes a-"bout Religion." It deſcribes ſo exactly

[n] Du Pin. eccleſ. hiſt. s. 1. p. 76, 83.

his Genius, Stile and Manner of Writing, that I could not help tranſcribing it, as it does him great Juſtice; the Character fits him as well, as if it had been drawn for him; and I hope it will not be thought an Affront, to compare him with one, whom his Brother Writer has claſſed among the venerable Fathers of the Church.

§ III. As to St. *Cyprian*, Biſhop of *Carthage*, and a Martyr for the Chriſtian Faith, (who comes next in the Order of the Manuſcript,) I am glad to find our Author call him "one of the greateſt Biſhops of the "third Age." If he had ſaid the greateſt, I ſhould not have differed with him; but though we are thus far agreed, I am afraid we ſhall travel no farther in the ſame Road.

Our learned Countryman Dr. *Sage*, and Dr. *Fell* of *England*, have taken great Pains, to have the Sentiments of St. *Cyprian* well underſtood, and Mr. *Marſhal* has tranſlated his Works into elegant Engliſh: So that I have leſs Occaſion to ſpend much Time on this Article, as whoſoever is ſo inclined, may ſatisfy himſelf.

I am really at a loſs to find out, what Uſe our Author could intend to make of St. *Cyprian*, (who is ſo evidently on our Side;) or how he could hope to turn to his Ad-

Advantage the Paſſage referred to, as it is leſs to the Purpoſe for which he brings it, (if that be poſſible) than the Quotations from *Irenæus* and *Tertullian*.

St. *Cyprian* was indeed a vigorous Aſſertor of the *Unity* of the Church, not in this Paſſage only, but in fifty others, which I could bring from his Books and Epiſtles, and very often he makes the Preſervation of this Unity, an Argument againſt the wrong Meaſures of the Biſhop of *Rome*. Can we then imagine, that when he mentions the Church, he means the Church of *Rome*? the contrary will appear by and by, even to Demonſtration.

In this Paſſage, he evidently points to the catholick not the *Roman* Church: "For he "compares the Church to the one Sun, "ſending forth many Rays, one Tree, "ſpreading many Branches, one Fountain, "yielding many Streams, or one fruitful "Mother, with a numerous Offspring."--- By all theſe Similitudes intending to illuſtrate and prove, that as there is but one Faith, one Hope, one Baptiſm, and one Lord, ſo there is but *one Church*. And will our Author dare to ſay, this is the Church of *Rome* and no other? I hope he is not ſo far forſaken of Truth and Modeſty. If St. *Cyprian* had had any one particular Church in his

his Eye, it must have been that of *Jerusalem*, where this Sun first rose, this Tree first sprouted, and these Streams had their Source, that is, where the Christian Religion had its *exordium*.

It is a common Fallacy, which runs thro' the Writings and Conversation of the Popish Missionaries; wherever in the Scriptures or Fathers, they find the Word *Church*, they would have it understood of theirs only, as if there was no other. Though they might with equal Propriety, bring those Expressions of St. *Paul*,---"The Churches of Christ salute you [o],——And the "Church of the First-born which are written in Heaven [p]," to prove the Infallibility, and Universality of the Church of *Rome*.

St. *Cyprian* had great Respect for *Cornelius* Bishop of *Rome*, who was indeed an excellent Prelate, and had the Honour of Martyrdom.---In his Letters to this *Cornelius*, he calls him "his Brother [q], his dear "Brother, his dearest Brother." And in his Letter to the Presbyters, and Deacons of *Rome*, written during the Vacancy of that See, he calls *Fabian* their late Bishop, *his*

[o] Rom. xvi. 16.
[p] Heb. xii. 23.
[q] Epist. 60. 44. 51.

his Collegue[r]; which implies ſuch an Equality, as was among the Tribunes or Conſuls, or any other joint Adminiſtrators of one and the ſame Office.

If the Biſhop of *Carthage* had thought himſelf ſubject, or in any Reſpect inferiour to the Biſhop of *Rome*, he would not have uſed this Term of unconteſted Equality. I ſuppoſe, if any Biſhop of the *Roman* Communion now, ſhould addreſs his Holineſs in the ſame Terms, he would ſoon be taught his Diſtance. But there was then no other Odds among Prelates, except that the Biſhop of the chief City had the Precedency in Meetings, but no Advantage in point of Power or Juriſdiction.

In a Letter to his Brother *Quintus* (a Biſhop in *Mauritania*) he ſays [s], "That no "Preſcription can be formed on Cuſtom, "where the Caſe is to be debated by the "Reaſon of Things.---That even *Peter* the "firſt of the Apoſtles, on whom Chriſt "built his Church, made for himſelf no "inſolent or haughty Claims, pretended "not to the Primacy, nor inſiſted upon a-"ny Obedience as due to him, from ſuch "as came into the Church after him, but

"was

[r] Epiſt. 9,
[s] Epiſt. 71.

" was content to receive good Counsel " from *Paul*, (*viz.* in the Dispute about " Circumcision) and to give into those Mea- " sures which *Paul* (with so much Reason) " insisted upon."

St. *Cyprian* had a very different Opinion of *Stephen* Bishop of *Rome*, and used him with less Respect than he had done *Cornelius*. In a Letter to his Brother *Pompeius* (Bishop of *Sabrata* in *Tripoly* [t],) he accuses *Stephen* " of Error, Unwariness, and Un- " skilfulness, of Pride, Impertinence, and " Self-contradiction."——And *Fermilian* (Bishop of *Cæsarea* in *Cappadocia*) in a Letter addrest to *Cyprian* his Brother in the Lord, loudly complains [u] " of the Absur- " dity of *Stephen*'s Conduct." Is this the Language of Men, who believed Infallibility or Supremacy to reside at *Rome*?

But lest these Expressions of St. *Cyprian* may be considered as proceeding from Passion, or the Keenness of his Temper, I will bring other Evidence of his Sentiments and Conduct, with respect to the same *Roman* Pontiff.

In his Time two *Spanish* Bishops (*viz.* *Basilides* of *Leon* and *Astorga*, and *Martial* of

[t] Epist. 74.

[u] Oper. D. Cyprian. p. 527. edit. Basileæ ann. 1525.

of *Merida*) having lapſed in Time of Perſecution, or being found (at leaſt) among the *Libellatici*, the Biſhops of *Spain* had judged them unworthy of the Epiſcopate, and diſpoſed of their Sees to *Sabinus* and *Fælix*: Upon this, *Baſilides* (and very probably *Martial* too) had Recourſe to *Stephen* Biſhop of *Rome*, who gave Countenance to the Petitioner, and admitted him to his Communion. In this Diſtreſs, the *Spaniſh* Biſhops wrote, and ſent Deputies to the Biſhops of *Africa*, who aſſembled in a Council at *Carthage*, to the Number of twenty eight, with St. *Cyprian* at their Head; and there it was concluded, " that *Baſili-*
" *des* and *Martial* ought not to be acknow-
" ledged as Biſhops; that it was not lawful to
" communicate with them; that ſuch Biſhops
" as did, ought to be excommunicated them-
" ſelves: And finally, that their impoſing
" upon *Stephen*, inſtead of giving them any
" Right to the Sees they had forfeited by
" their Wickedneſs, added to their Guilt.
" —And the Election of *Sabinus* and *Fæ-*
" *lix* was confirmed, and they acknowled-
" ged by the *African* Biſhops as their Col-
" legues."

One would imagine, this was coming far ſhort of that Reſpect and Submiſſion, now claimed as due to the See of *Rome*;

but *Bellarmine* and *Baronius* (with their uſual Sagacity) turn the Argument the other Way, and will needs have it conclude for the Pope's Supremacy: "For (ſay they) *Baſilides* and *Martial* would not have appealed to the Biſhop of *Rome*, had they not acknowledged him for the Head of the Church."----Well, be it ſo; but by the ſame Logick, the Biſhops of *Spain* diſregarding *Stephen*, and appealing to St. *Cyprian*, will imply their acknowledging the Biſhop of *Carthage* for Head of the Church. So that the two Cardinals will get nothing by this.----Let them enjoy their two depoſed Biſhops, and we will be content with the catholick Biſhops of *Spain*, and the *African* Church, on our Side.

I will mention but one Inſtance more, by which this Matter will, I hope, be put beyond all Doubt. It is the Controverſy about the *Baptiſm of Hereticks*, which (about the Middle of the 3d Century) rent the whole Church into two Parties, the one headed by St. *Cyprian*, and the other by *Stephen*. I do not enter into the Merits of the Cauſe, nor will I take upon me to ſay, which of them was in the right, (perhaps they both went to Extremes.) But when I have given a ſhort Abſtract of the Caſe, it will evidently appear, that St. *Cyprian* did not conſider the Biſhop of

of *Rome* as univerſal Paſtor, or infallible Judge of Controverſies.

" The Biſhops of *Numidia* having con-
" ſulted St. *Cyprian*, and a Council then
" ſitting at *Carthage*, concerning the Vali-
" dity of Baptiſm adminiſtred by Hereticks,
" they gave as their Opinion, that it was
" null and void, and conſequently that ſuch
" as came over from them, from what Sect
" ſoever they came, ought to be baptized
" by a catholick Miniſter [a]."

St. *Cyprian* owned there was but *one Baptiſm*, and therefore avoided the Word *Rebaptization*, but thought that Hereticks had not the Power of conferring this one Baptiſm.

This Judgment was confirmed by a ſubſequent Council of 71 Biſhops at *Carthage*, and a ſynodical Letter written " to ac-
" quaint *Stephen* Biſhop of *Rome* with
" theſe Reſolutions, hoping he would ap-
" prove and embrace them; but at the
" ſame Time declaring, that if any Biſhop
" ſhould think fit to reject them, and fol-
" low different Opinions, (agreeable to the
" Liberty they all claimed) no Breach of
" Peace and Unity ſhould thence follow
" on either Side [b]."

[a] Cypr. Ep. 72.
[b] Id. Ep. 70. 73.

Stephen's Opinion in this Matter was directly contrary to theirs, *viz.* " that Baptiſm conferred by Hereticks of whatever Sect or Perſuaſion (*ex quacunque hæreſi ad vos venerint*) was valid; not duly conſidering that ſome Hereticks of thoſe Times, particularly the *Montaniſts* and *Marcionites*, did not baptize, as is commanded in the Goſpel, in the Name of the Holy Trinity."

To this reſpectful Letter from the Council of *Carthage*, " *Stephen* writes an Anſwer ſtuffed with Pride and Arrogance, with many hard Names and bitter Invectives againſt *Cyprian*, whom he orders to quit his Opinion, threatning to cut him off from the Communion of the Church, if he did not, and all that ſhould adhere to him [c].

Now was the Time for *Cyprian* to humble himſelf to the viſible Head of the whole catholick Church, and acquieſce in the peremptory Deciſion of the infallible Judge of Controverſies; but he ſeems not to have known ſuch an one, or that theſe Powers and Privileges were lodged with the *Roman* Pontif, for he took the direct contrary Courſe: And St. *Auguſtine* owns, " that " *Cyprian* was not obliged to yield to the " Au-

[c] Cypr. Ep. 74.

" Authority of *Stephen*, nor give up the " Point, until he was convinced by Dint " of Reaſon, or the Deciſion of an œcu- " menical Council [d].

St. *Cyprian*, in a Letter to *Pompeius*, " complains of this Haughtineſs in *Ste-* " *phen*, whom he treats with more than " ordinary Sharpneſs and Acrimony, cal- " ling him a Favourer and Abettor of He- " reticks againſt the Church of God [e]."

However, as *Cyprian* ſought nothing but Truth, and never took too much upon himſelf, he ſummoned another great Council (of 85 or 87 Biſhops, beſides Presbyters and Deacons) which met at *Carthage* on the 1ſt of *September anno* 256. The whole Caſe being laid before this Council, St. *Cyprian* made a Speech, exhorting his Collegues to ſpeak their Minds freely, adding theſe memorable Words (with a ſquint Look, no doubt, to the Pride and Arrogance of the Biſhop of *Rome*.) " Let none of us ſet up for the *Biſhop* " *of Biſhops*; let none of us preſume to reduce " our Collegues by a tyrannical Fear, to the " Neceſſity of obeying." This Council, not convinced of the ſupreme Authority, nor awed by the Menaces of the Biſhop of *Rome*,

[d] Aug. de Bapt. lib. 1. cap. 7. 18. & lib. 2. cap. 8. 15. tom. 7. p. 374.

[e] Cypr. Ep. 74.

Rome, unanimouſly confirmed the Decrees of the two former Councils about baptizing Hereticks; and that they might, if poſſible, preſerve the Peace of the Church, they ſent Deputies to acquaint *Stephen* with what they had done, and with the Reaſons on which their Opinion was grounded.

Stephen refuſed to ſee the Deputies, forbad his Flock to correſpond with them, or to afford them Lodging, and the common Neceſſaries of Life, excluding them, not only from his Communion, but from common Hoſpitality [f]. And at laſt, that he might appear a Man of his Word, "he cut off from "his Communion all the Biſhops who had "aſſiſted at the Council, and all thoſe who "held the ſame Opinion,"----that is, the Biſhops of *Africa*, *Numidia*, *Mauritania*, *Cilicia*, *Cappadocia*, *Galatia*, and *Ægypt* [g].

What was the Reſult of all this? Did all theſe Biſhops and Churches ſubmit to the Pope, as Chriſt's Vicar General upon Earth? No, not one of them. *Stephen*'s Anathema proved but *brutum fulmen*, as thoſe of *Victor* had done before: No Regard was had to them, even by thoſe of his own Party, who, by continuing in Communion with thoſe whom he had cut off from his, ſufficiently declared their Thoughts, touching his raſh and

[f] Firm. ad Cypr. Ep. 81. 75.
[g] Euſeb. lib. 7. cap. 5.

and unchriſtian Conduct: And St. *Auguſtine* commends them for doing ſo, telling "us, that the Peace of Chriſt triumphed in "their Hearts, and put a Stop to the grow-"ing Schiſm."

And here I will leave the Reader to judge, if it is probable that St. *Cyprian* believed, or ever wrote a Line in Support of the Infallibility, or Supremacy of the Biſhop or Church of *Rome*.

§ IV. In the next Paragraph of the Manuſcript, our learned Author has crowded together three ſeveral Authorities, *viz.* of *Lactantius*, St. *Athanaſius*, and St. *Pacian*; as if he intended an immediate Storm, by ſuch triple Diſcharge of his Artillery: But unluckily for him, the Words are as general, indefinite and unmeaning of what he would have them ſpeak out, as theſe already conſidered. They prove indeed all that they contain (and which is not denied) for the Church catholick, but not for the *Roman*, or any one particular Church, as will ſoon appear: So that theſe Teſtimonies are good ones, only they are nothing to our Author's Purpoſe.

1. *Lactantius* (ſuppoſed to be ſo ſirnamed from the Softneſs and Delicacy of his Stile, his proper Name being *Lucius Celius Fir-*

Firmianus) had ſtudied and taught Rhetorick, with ſuch Succeſs and Reputation, that *Conſtantine* took him to be Preceptor to his Son *Criſpus*. He is confeſſedly the moſt eloquent of all the eccleſiaſtical Authors that wrote in *Latin*, inſomuch that he is called the Chriſtian *Cicero*, and ſome Criticks have affirmed, that he was nothing inferior to *Tully*, in the Purity of his Language, and Turn of his Phraſe.

But though this is acknowledged of his Stile, yet St. *Jerome* thinks him wanting in point of Accuracy, when he treats of the Myſteries of Chriſtianity; and Pope *Damaſus* ſaid, "he found no great Pleaſure "in reading the Books of *Lactantius*." After all which, I wonder how this Gentleman has put him into ſuch Company. However the Words cited from him, Par. 12. *viz.* "That the Church is the Foun-"tain of Truth, the Houſe of Faith, and "the Temple of God," are certainly orthodox and unexceptionable, as they are the ſame, or at leaſt equivalent to ſome in the holy Scriptures, which have been conſidered in the preceeding Chapter, p. 93. and therefore do not need another Examination here.

I ſhall only ſay, that as this Author has given us Proteſtants a Quotation from *Lactantius*, which we did not need, ſince we had

had the Thing before, from an Authority much greater than his; it were to be wiſhed he had ſent to thoſe of his own Communion, another Paſſage from the ſame *Lactantius*, who in the very next (that is in the 5th) Book of his Inſtitutions, ſays "that "the Way to convert and recover Men "from Error, is by the Force of Reaſon, "not of Puniſhments; that we cannot, and "that we ought not to conſtrain Men to "be of our Religion, which is a Thing "not to be propagated or defended by kill-"ing of others, but by dying for it our-"ſelves, not by Cruelty, but by Patience [h]." This had been good Advice to the Fathers of the Inquiſition, as fitly applied, and as neceſſary for them, as the other to us. Had *Lactantius* lived ſome Centuries later, and been in the Communion of the Church of *Rome*, he muſt have ſtifled thoſe Sentiments, for fear of condemning her modern Arts (*Mahumetan* Methods) of propagating Religion, by Racks and Tortures, by Rebellions, Murders and Maſſacres.

2. Of all Things I wonder moſt to find St. *Athanaſius* brought into the Field againſt us, to ſupport *Roman* Infallibility.

[h] Du Pin. v. 1. p. 165. &c.

Had I been writing for the Church of *Rome*, I would carefully have avoided to name that extraordinary Man, who can be ſcarce mentioned, without bringing to the Remembrance of them who know the Hiſtory of that Time, a moſt glaring Inſtance of *Roman Fallibility*, and actual Defection from the catholick Faith.

St. *Athanaſius* had early appeared a vigorous Aſſertor of the Divinity of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which he maintained againſt the *Arians*, with more Learning and Argument, greater Firmneſs and Conſtancy, than any other of that Time: He diſtinguiſhed himſelf at the great Council of *Nice*, though he was there only as a Deacon to *Alexander* Biſhop of *Alexandria*, to whom he ſucceeded in that See, where continuing a vigilant Keeper, and ſtrenuous Defender of the catholick Doctrine, the *Arians* (unequal to him in point of fair Argument) had Recourſe to Lies and Calumnies, with which they ſtuffed Informations and Complaints ſent againſt him to the Emperor.

Athanaſius, to prevent the Storm which this might bring upon him, writes to *Julius* Biſhop of *Rome*, clearing himſelf of what theſe falſe Accuſations had charged him with. *Julius* dying ere this Vindication came to *Rome*, it was put into the Hands

of

of *Liberius* who ſucceeded him in the Chair, 22d *May* 352.----He (being in dread of *Conſtantius*, then Maſter of *Italy*) wanted to ingratiate himſelf with the *Arians*, and by their Means with the Emperor: For this Purpoſe he is ſaid to have written a Letter to St. *Athanaſius*, and another to the *Euſebians* or *Arians*, acquainting them, " that he communicated with them, but as " for *Athanaſius*, he had cut him off from " his Communion, and from that of his " Church."----This Letter is preſerved in the Fragments of *Hilary* Biſhop of *Poictiers* [i], and if it is a true one, brings an indelible Reproach upon the Memory of that Pope. But as *Baronius*, the *Benedictines*, and *Du Pin*, have queſtioned its Authenticity, I will not inſiſt upon it; and the rather, that if the Timidity of *Liberius* at that Time did puſh him to make that falſe Step, he ſoon recovered his Pannick, and repented of what he had done. For when *Conſtantius* aſſembled a Council at *Arles*, *Liberius* laboured hard to prevent the Condemnation of *Athanaſius*; but to his great Grief, his Legates at that Council, (being threatened with Baniſhment, in caſe of Recuſancy) ſigned that Condemnation, and

[i] Hilar. frag. 1. p. 36. 40.

(to uſe their own ſoftening Expreſſion) "yielded to the Torrent of the Times[k]."

This Condemnation of St. *Athanaſius* was repeated in a ſubſequent Council at *Milan*, in the Year 355, where (*Ruffinus* ſays) of three hundred Weſtern Biſhops, there were but three (*viz.* *Dionyſius* of *Milan*, *Euſebius* of *Vercelli*, and *Lucifer* of *Cagliari*) who ſhewed a Firmneſs and Intrepidity becoming Men of their ſacred Character[l].

The Emperor tried every Mean to bring *Liberius* to ſign the Condemnation of *Athanaſius*; but he remonſtrating with all the Liberty that became a catholick Biſhop, and (at the ſame Time) with all the Reſpect that is due from a Subject to his Prince, and continuing unmoved, either by the Threats, Flatteries, or Preſents of *Conſtantius*, is ſent into Exile, to *Beræa* in *Thrace*, and one *Felix* was (by the *Arian* Party) placed in his Chair at *Rome*.

This will ſoon open to us a very melancholy Scene, a moſt affecting Inſtance of human Frailty, enough to ſend every good Man often to his Prayers to God, for Strength and Steadineſs in the Day of Trial. *Liberius* ſoon wearies of the Hardſhips of

[k] Hilar. frag. 2. p. 42.
[l] Ruffin. l. 1. c. 20.

of Exile, and forſakes the glorious Cauſe he had of late maintained with ſo much Honour; and that he might again ingratiate himſelf with the Emperor, and be allowed to return to *Rome*, " he abandons his per-
" ſecuted Brother, renounces the catholick
" Faith, and ſolemnly promiſeth to maintain
" inviolably the Doctrine of *Sirmium*." He writes (in a moſt ſubmiſſive, cringing Stile) to the *Eaſtern Biſhops*, aſſuring them, " that
" it was merely out of Reſpect to his Pre-
" deceſſor *Julius*, that he had undertaken
" the Defence of *Athanaſius*;---that as ſoon
" as it had pleaſed God to open his Eyes,
" and diſcover to him, how juſtly he had
" been condemned, he had ſeparated him-
" ſelf from his Communion, and joined
" them; that all their Decrees concerning
" him ſhould be inviolably obſerved by the
" Apoſtolick See, as indeed they ought to
" be; that he ſincerely and willingly re-
" ceived the true catholick and orthodox
" Faith, as it had been expounded and de-
" fined by ſeveral of his Brethren and Col-
" legues at *Sirmium*, and had been propo-
" ſed to him by his Collegue *Demophilus*;
" (N. B. this was the *Arian* Biſhop of *Be-*
" *ræa*) that he received every Article of
" that Symbol, and had nothing to object
" againſt any."---Concluding thus:---" And

" now

" now that I agree with you in every Point,
" let me earneſtly intreat your Holineſſes,
" to employ your united intereſt in my Be-
" half, that I may be recalled from Baniſh-
" ment, and ſuffered to return to the See,
" which God has been pleaſed to commit
" to my Care [z]."

To the ſame Purpoſe he wrote to *Urſacius*, *Valens*, *Vincentius*, and other (violent *Arian*) Biſhops in the Weſt, " acquainting " them, that he had ſeparated himſelf from " the Communion of *Athanaſius late Biſhop* " *of Alexandria*;" by which Expreſſion he acknowledges him to have been juſtly and lawfully depoſed.

Theſe ſcandalous Letters have been conveyed to us by the great *Hilarius* Biſhop of *Poictiers*, who, not able to reſtrain the juſt Indignation they kindled in his Breaſt, does ſeveral Times interrupt the Recital to anathematize the Author of them, the *prevaricating Liberius*, as he calls him.——And it is to be remembered that the Genuineneſs of theſe Letters is not diſputed, as that of the former was.

The Effect of theſe humble ſupplicating Letters was, that *Liberius* was recalled from *Beræa*, the Place of his Exile, to *Sirmium* in

[z] Hil. frag. 1. p. 47. *&c.* Du Pin. v. 2. p. 63.

in *Sclavonia*, where *Conſtantius* then was, who being by this Time become *Semi-arian*, cauſed *Liberius* ſubſcribe to their Doctrine at *Sirmium*, as he had done to that of the *Arians* at *Beræa* before.

Liberius having thus fully complied with the Will of the Emperor, was ſuffered to return to *Rome*, *on Condition that he ſhould govern jointly with Fælix*.-----And *Sozomen* ſeems to inſinuate [a], that they both governed thus for ſome Time, though others ſay, (and, I think, with greater Probability) that *Fælix* was driven out of the City, ſoon as *Liberius* entered into it, which was on the 2d of *Auguſt* 358 [b].

Be that as it will, one of them muſt have been an Intruder, an Uſurper, an Antipope.---*Fælix* was (without Doubt) an *Arian*; St. *Athanaſius* calls him a "a Monſter raiſed to the See of *Rome*, by the "Malice of *Anti-chriſt* [c];" and yet the Church of *Rome* (ever liberal in her Canonizations, equally forward to favour her Friends and damn her Adverſaries) has enrolled both theſe Competitors among the Saints: The Feſtival of *Fælix* being ſtill kept

[a] Soz. lib. 4. cap. 15.
[b] Hier. Chron. Marcel. & Fauſtin. p. 4.
[c] Socrat. lib. 2. cap. 37. Athan. ad Solit. p. 861.

kept on the 29th of *July*, and of the other on the 23d of *September*.

In the Times I have been treating of, the *Arian Hereſy* had (by the Influence of the Emperor) prevailed ſo much, and ſpread ſo far, that the true Chriſtian Faith was ſcarce to be found but in Deſarts and Mountains, in Dens and Caves of the Earth, or ſuch other obſcure Places, to which the few ſteady Confeſſors of it had been baniſhed, by Sentence or Neceſſity; in ſo much that it became proverbial,----*ingemuit mundus*,----" the World groaned under the " Preſſure of Hereſy, and Blaſphemy, and " wondered to ſee it itſelf become *Arian*. ----" One *Athanaſius* againſt all the World, " and the whole World againſt *Athanaſi-* " *us*."

It is true indeed, that *Liberius* (after his Return to *Rome*) repented of what he had done, reconciled himſelf to St. *Athanaſius*, and endeavoured to reſtore the *Nicene* Creed; but it is undeniable, that for ſome Time before, he had been plunged as deep as any other in the general Apoſtacy, had ſigned Confeſſions of Faith very different from that of St. *Peter*, " that Jeſus Chriſt is the " Son of the living God, (*i. e.* of the ſame " Subſtance with the Father)" and had thereby forſaken the *Rock* upon which the Church

Church was built:----And was he infallible all the while?

The Advocates for this papal Privilege have drudged long and hard to vindicate *Liberius*; but all in vain. In ſpite of all their unmeaning Diſtinctions, and eluding Subterfuges, ſink they muſt, and their Infallibility with them.----*Bellarmine* [d] would have us believe, "that the Pope may ſign "and receive heretical Opinions, (as *Libe-* "*rius* did) provided he does not internally "aſſent to them." This might perhaps have been the Caſe with poor *Liberius*, that he ſigned what he did not internally aſſent to; but by the Cardinal's good Leave, this confines the Pope's Infallibility to himſelf alone, and conſequently diſqualifies him for the Office of a Teacher or Judge.

I own indeed that Infallibility even thus curtailed and reſtrained, would be a moſt valuable Treaſure to the Poſſeſſor, but to the reſt of Mankind, of no more Value than a rich Treaſure hid under Ground. Sure, *Bellarmine* himſelf cannot be ſo unreaſonable, as to require us (in Virtue of ſuch Prerogative) to ſubmit to the Deciſions of a Pope, 'till ſuch Time at leaſt, as we know them to be the very Sentiments of his Heart; and this is what we never can know, ſince eve-

[d] De Rom. Pontif. lib. 4. cap. 9.

ry Pope may (like *Liberius*) externally admit an Opinion, or Doctrine, as true, and at the ſame Time, internally reject it as falſe.

I have no Pleaſure in diſturbing the Aſhes of the Dead, and expoſing their Failings, well knowing, that it is the ſame God "who makes one Star differ from another "in Glory," who made the great Odds between St. *Athanaſius* and *Liberius*, and whoſe Grace alone it is that enables any Man "to "ſtand in the evil Day, and having done all "to ſtand." But theſe unwary Miſſionaries have forced me upon this diſagreeable Office: I pray God may forgive them, and bring them to a better Mind.

Perhaps I ought ſooner to have acquainted the Reader, that this Book *adv. Hæreſ.* from which the Author of the Manuſcript brings this Authority, is ſpurious, and tho' printed with the Works of St. *Athanaſius*, is acknowledged by Criticks (even of the *Roman* Communion) to be none of his. *Du Pin* ſays, "it is confuſed, and the Stile mean, "and oppoſes in a few Words *all Hereſies*, "contrary to the Cuſtom of St. *Athanaſius*, "who refutes very largely all thoſe he "takes in hand [c]."-----But I might have ſpared to make this Remark, as the Gentleman is ſo apt to ſtumble into theſe little Miſtakes.

Upon

[c] Du Pin, vol. 2. p. 37.

Upon a Review of this mournful Story, and of thoſe authentick Records from which it is taken, I will leave to the Reader to judge of the Sentiments of St. *Athanaſius*, in this Queſtion, Whether he could think the Biſhop and Church of *Rome* infallible, when they renounced an eſſential Article of the Chriſtian Faith, and condemned him for maintaining it? and whether the Author of the Manuſcript had not done as wiſely to have let this (uncommonly great and holy) Man reſt in Peace?

3. St. *Pacianus* is the laſt of the three, which, in this pregnant Paragraph, are brought into the Field againſt us. He was Biſhop of *Barcelona*, eminent for his Sanctity and Eloquence, and died in the Reign of *Theodoſius*, towards the Year 380.

Whether, when he calls the Church "a ſpotleſs Virgin," he meant the univerſal Church of Chriſt, or the *Roman*, will appear from the following Tranſcripts from his Works. -----In the firſt Part of his Letter to *Sempronianus*, he argues againſt the *Novatians* (as *Tertullian* had formerly done againſt all Hereſies) from Preſcription. "He oppoſes to them the ancient Fathers of the "Church, who were Succeſſors to the A-"poſtles: Why ſhould not we (ſays he) "have a Reſpect to the Authority of theſe

apoſtolical Men? (what Occaſion had he for more than one of theſe apoſtolical Men, the infallible Judge at *Rome*, if he thought him ſuch? But inſtead of that, he adds) "Shall we pay no Deference to the Teſti-"mony of St. *Cyprian?* Would he teach "this Doctrine? Are we wiſer than he? "But, what ſhall we ſay of ſo many "Biſhops diſperſed over all the World, "who are united with theſe Saints? What "ſhall we ſay of ſo many venerable old "Men, of ſo many Martyrs, and ſo many "Confeſſors? Is it for us to reform them? "Shall our Times, corrupted by Vice, ef-"face the venerable Antiquity of our An-"ceſtors?"

And in his laſt Letter to the ſame Perſon, wherein he treats of Penance againſt *Novatian*, he ſays, "that all the Doctrine "of the *Novatians* explained by *Sempro-"nianus*, is contained in this ſingle Propo-"ſition, *That Penance is not allowed after "Baptiſm, becauſe the Church cannot for-"give mortal Sin, and but deſtroys herſelf "by receiving Sinners.* Who is it (ſays he) "that propoſes this Doctrine? Is it *Moſes?* "Is it St. *Paul?* Is it Jeſus Chriſt? No, "it is *Novatian*: And who is this *Novati-"an?* Is he a Man pure and blameleſs, "*&c.* Did this Man follow the Prophets?

"Was

" Was he a Prophet? Did he raiſe the Dead?
" Did he work Miracles? Did he ſpeak all
" Sorts of Languages? For at leaſt he
" ought to have theſe Signs, for eſtabliſh-
" ing a new Goſpel; and though he had,
" yet the Apoſtle aſſures us, that *though an*
" *Angel ſhould deſcend from Heaven to teach*
" *us a new Goſpel, he ſhould be accurſ-*
" *ed* [f]."

Here we have St. *Pacian* reaſoning juſt in the Way that Proteſtants do, appealing to Antiquity, Univerſality, and Conſent; to the Doctrine of holy Scripture, of the Prophets, Apoſtles, and of Jeſus Chriſt, but not a Word of a living infallible Judge.

Perhaps my learned Adverſary may ſay, that my Argument from St. *Pacian*'s Way of Reaſoning is ſtrained, and can conclude nothing againſt him; becauſe he believes a viſible infallible Judge; and yet he reaſons againſt Proteſtants, juſt as St. *Pacian* did againſt the *Novatians*, *i. e.* from Scripture and Fathers.--------But, by his Favour, there is great and manifeſt Odds between them.——He writes *ex profeſſo* for the Infallibility of the *Roman* Church, and names it; whereas St. *Pacian* never names it, never gives the leaſt Hint or Innuendo

[f] Vide Du Pin. v. 2. p. 82, 83.

do that points that Way, but rather the contrary. For why ſhould he have had Recourſe to *Africa* rather than *Italy*? Why have named St. *Cyprian*, rather than *Stephen* or *Liberius* and *Damaſus*, who were Popes in his Time, but that he thought the Judgment and Practice of the firſt were of greater Authority, more deciſive, and ſafer to depend on, than thoſe of the others? Why ſhould he have ſent us to *Carthage*, and a whole Century backward for Direction? Might he not have ſtopt at *Rome*, (which was nigher) had he known any thing of a living, viſible, unerring Guide, a final Judge of Controverſies ſtill reſiding there [8]?

§ V. St. *Auguſtine* comes next in the Order of the Manuſcript, and the Author of the *Shorteſt Way* has produced the ſame Paſſages with two more, all to the ſame Tune. They affirm indeed (what is not denied) the Perpetuity of the Chriſtian Faith, and Indefectibility of the catholick Church, which (in thoſe very Places) he ſays, is ſpread over all the World; and he proves the

[8] Vide Hilar. frag. 1. p. 36. 40. Id. frag. 2. p. 42. Ruffin. l. 1. c. 20. Hilar. frag. 1. p. 47, 48, 49. Du Pin, v. 2. p. 63. Sozom. l. 4. c. 15. Hier. Chron. Marcell. & Fauſtin. p. 4. Socrat. l. 2. c. 37. Athan. ad Solit. p. 861. Bell. de Rom. Pont. l. 4. c. 9. Du Pin, v. 2. p. 37. & p. 82, 83.

the Stability of this univerſal Church, from thoſe very Texts of holy Scripture, which are explained in the former Chapter of this Eſſay, and ſhewed to have no Relation to *Roman* Infallibility, whereof this learned Father ſays not one Word.

In the 3d Section of this Chapter, I have given a Hint of St. *Auguſtine*'s Sentiments on the Subject in Queſtion: His declaring St. *Cyprian* not obliged to ſubmit to the Authority of the Biſhop of *Rome*, till convinced by Reaſon, *&c.* and his commending the other Biſhops of that Time, for diſregarding the Cenſures of *Stephen* (the ſame Biſhop of *Rome*) thundered out againſt the *African* and *Aſiatick* Churches, ſhew plainly what Opinion he had of *Roman* Infallibility, and univerſal Juriſdiction.

But, as this Father is highly honoured by the Church of *Rome*, as the Schoolmen, *Peter Lombard* and *Thomas Aquinas*, have formed their Syſtems of Theology, chiefly out of his voluminous Writings, and as they ſeldom fail of appealing to him in Matters contraverted, it will be fit to explain his Sentiments ſomewhat more fully upon the Point in diſpute.

St. *Auguſtine* was born at *Tagaſta* in *Numidia*, the 13th of *November* 354.—— There he taught Grammar, and frequent-

ed

ed the Bar for ſome Time. When he was twenty five Years old, he taught Rhetorick at *Carthage*, with Applauſe, as he did afterwards at *Rome* and *Milan*, where (by the happy Miniſtry of St. *Ambroſe*) he was converted and baptized, about the thirty ſecond Year of his Age. Returning to *Africk*, he was by *Valerius* Biſhop of *Hippo*, ordained a Prieſt *anno* 391.---Four Years after, the ſame *Valerius* choſe him his Co-adjutor, and he was conſecrated Biſhop of *Hippo*, by *Megalius* of *Calama*, then Primate of *Numidia*. He died in the ſeventy ſixth Year of his Age, *A. D.* 430. with Grief to ſee his Country invaded by the *Vandals*, and the City whereof he was Biſhop, beſieged for ſeveral Months.

To attain to a diſtinct and certain Knowledge of his Sentiments, with reſpect to the Infallibility, and Catholiciſm of the Church of *Rome*, I will direct the Reader to ſome Paſſages in his Writings, and ſome in the Hiſtory of his Time [h].

In his Enarration on the 57th Pſalm (the very Place to which our learned Authors appeal) he ſays, " Let us ſpeak the Things " which we have heard, namely, what God " ſays, not what Man ſays, for it may hap-

" pen

[h] Aug. tom. 8. p. 567. & 413. edit. Baſileæ.

" pen that Man may lie.——Let our Pa-
" pers and Diſputes (ſays he) be laid aſide,
" and let the Book of God be brought
" forth; let us hear Truth ſpeaking, let us
" hear Chriſt ſaying, *Go, and preach in his*
" *Name, Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins,*
" *throughout all Nations, beginning at* Jeru-
" ſalem." This ſending us directly to the inſpired Writings, without any Mention of a living infallible Judge, has a Proteſtant Look: Had theſe Gentlemen read the whole Chapter, and adverted to this, they would probably have rowed to ſome other Shore.

In his Commentaries on the *Pſalms*, St. *Auguſtine* never miſſes an Opportunity of confuting the *Donatiſts*, who (as was before obſerved from *Optatus Milevitanus*) vapoured not a little, on a Conceit of their Purity and Catholiciſm. It had therefore been much for his Purpoſe to have directed them to *Rome*, had he thought the Head of the catholick Church was there: But there is never a Word of that, he only mentions *Rome*, as a *Siſter Church*, and not at all in the Stile of Pope *Pius* IV. as the *Mother and Miſtreſs of all Churches*.

Thus in his Enarration on the 45th *Pſalm*, he ſays, " Behold *Rome*, behold *Carthage*,
" behold ſeveral other Cities, theſe are Kings
" Daughters, and have delighted the King

" in his Honour, yet they all make up but " one Queen."——How incongruous, how faulty had this Expreſſion been deemed, had St. *Auguſtine* lived in the Time of the Council of *Trent?* There he would have been taught to ſpeak other Language, to have ſaluted the Church of *Rome*, as Queen of all the reſt, and other particular Churches, only as her Daughters and Handmaids.

Writing againſt the ſame *Donatiſts* [i], he ſays, " That canonical Scripture is to be " preferred before any other Writings, for " they are to be believed without Examina- " tion; but the Writings of Biſhops are to " be examined and corrected by other Bi- " ſhops and Councils, if they ſee Cauſe, " and the leſſer Councils by greater, and " the greateſt Councils by ſuch as come " after them, when Truth comes to be " more fully diſcovered."—It is ſcarce poſ- ſible to ſpeak plainer than St. *Auguſtine* here does, againſt a ſtanding infallible Judge in Controverſies, or more diſtinctly to ſtate the Difference of Church Guides and their Authority, when compared with that of holy Scripture.

Writing againſt *Maximinus* the *Arian* [k], " he deſires all other Authorities may be laid " aſide,

[i] De Bapt. contra Donat. l. 2. c. 3.
[k] Contra Maxim. Arian. l. 3. c. 14.

" aſide, and only thoſe of Scripture and " Reaſon uſed." This had been quite impertinent, if he had not thought Scripture and Reaſon ſufficient to end the Controverſy.

Writing againſt *Fauſtus* the *Manichean* [l], he ſays, " The Excellency of *canonical Scrip-* " *ture* is ſuch, as to be placed on a Throne, " far above all other Writings, to which " every faithful and pious Mind ought to " ſubmit; all other Writings are to be tri- " ed by them, but there is no Doubt to be " made of whatever we find in them."

Writing againſt the *Pelagians* [m], he adviſes them, " to yield to the Authority of " Scripture, which can neither deceive, nor " be deceived.——This Controverſy (ſays " he) requires a Judge; let Chriſt be Judge, " let us hear him ſpeak. Let the Apoſtle " judge, for Chriſt ſpeaks in his Apoſtle; " let St. *John* ſit Judge between us."--And in ſhort, the Current of his Doctrine is, " That we ought to acquieſce in the Au- " thority of Scripture, and when any Con- " troverſy ariſes, it ought to be quietly " ended by Proofs brought from thence."

Had St. *Auguſtine* lived a thouſand Years later, he muſt (by Authority of the Coun-

[l] De Bapt. contra Fauſt. l. 11. c. 5.

[m] De peccat. merit. & remiſ. l. 1. c. 22. de nupt. & l. 2. c. 33. & de grat. & lib. arbit. c. 18.

cil of *Trent*, Seſſion 4th) have brought in *Tradition* upon a Level in Authority with the holy Scriptures, or he could not have been in Communion with the Church of *Rome* [n].

Here I cannot help calling to mind an Expreſſion of the Emperor *Conſtantine*, in the great Council of *Nice*, much to the ſame Purpoſe [o], *viz.* "That the Books of "Scripture do plainly inſtruct us what "we are to believe concerning the Deity, "if we ſearch them with peaceable Minds." *Bellarmine*'s Anſwer to this is ſmart, but not very polite [p], *viz.* "That *Conſtantine* "was a great Emperor, but no great Do-"ctor." To ſuch Audaciouſneſs were the papal Champions arrived in the 16th Century, that they paid little Reſpect to any crowned Head, except to the Pope, who (by this Time) had got a triple Crown.

The Author of the *Shorteſt Way* [q], has given us another Paſſage from St. *Auguſtine*, which it may be fit to explain a little, as he ſeems very fond of it, and it is ſo often in the Mouths of the *Romiſh* Miſſionaries, *viz.* "That he (St. *Auguſtine*) would not have "be-

[n] Con. Trident. ſeſſ. 4.
[o] Theod. l. 1. c. 6.
[p] De verb. Dei, l. 4. c. 11.
[q] Part 1. p. 80.

" believed the Goſpels themſelves, unleſs
" the Authority of the Church had indu-
" ced him to it.---And ſince (ſays our Au-
" thor) he believed the Scriptures themſel-
" ves barely upon her Authority, it cannot
" be doubted but he believed, ſhe might
" likewiſe be ſafely truſted with the Inter-
" pretation of their true Senſe and Mean-
" ing."

Here it might be ſufficient to obſerve, 1*ſt*, That Authority is one Thing, and Infallibility is another, and that the one may well ſubſiſt without the other; and, 2*dly*, St. *Auguſtine* here ſpeaks of the Authority, or faithful Tradition of the whole catholick or univerſal Church of Chriſt, in preſerving and delivering down this ſacred *Depoſit*, and not that of the *Roman* Church only, for theſe are already ſhewed to have been always diſtinct, and now (in many Reſpects) different Societies.

But to make this Matter quite plain, it is fit to obſerve the Occaſion, on which this Expreſſion was uſed. St. *Auguſtine*, in his younger Years, had been ſeduced by the Authority of *Manes* (Father of the *Manichæans*) to reject the Goſpel: In his riper Age, he is brought (by the Teſtimony of the catholick Church) to reject that Authority: He finds *Manes* to have been no

Apoſtle

Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt's appointing, and believes the catholick Church rather than him. This does not make the Authority of the Church greater than that of Scripture, but only greater than that of *Manes*, and the *Manichees*; nor would he have followed any Church againſt plain Scripture handed down to him by that Church.

To illuſtrate this, let us ſuppoſe a *Jew* and a Chriſtian in a Diſpute about the Divinity of Jeſus Chriſt, and his being the promiſed *Meſſiah*. The *Jew* denies this; the Chriſtian endeavours to convince him of it, by Teſtimonies from the Prophets in the Old Teſtament.---Hold, ſays the *Jew*, I can allow of no ſuch Argument, for the ſame "Authority of the *Jewiſh* Church," which induced me to believe theſe Prophets, doth alſo oblige me not to believe your *Jeſus* (whom ſhe condemned as an Impoſtor) to be our *Meſſiah*.

I hope no Chriſtian will ſay, the *Jew's* Argument is good in this Caſe; and as little can the ſame Argument be ſuſtained in the other. For

In both Caſes the Argument proceeds upon a very feeble, groundleſs Suppoſition, *viz.* that no Church can deliver a *Book for canonical*, but that Church muſt at all Times judge aright concerning all things contained

ed in that Book, or relating to it, and have the exclusive Privilege of explaining it; and if this be admitted, it unavoidably makes the *Jewish Church infallible*, at the same Time that she condemned our Lord Jesus Christ as a Deceiver, which is not only trifling, and false, but too blasphemous to be further insisted on.

Having said thus much of the Writings of St. *Augustine*, to point out his real Sentiments on the Subject in Question, and to rescue him from the Aspersions of these Gentlemen, I will now make a few Remarks on his Conduct, and the Part he acted in some of the remarkable Incidents in his Time.

In the Year 312, a Council at *Carthage* condemned *Cælestius*, a Disciple of *Pelagius*. *Cælestius* appealed to *Rome*, at least *Baronius* says so [a]. But if he did, either *Innocent*, then Bishop of *Rome*, did not receive the Appeal, or the *African* Bishops had no Regard to it, for they went on in their own Way, condemning him anew, without waiting for the Judgment of *Innocent*.

This *Innocent* was (according to St. *Jerome* [b]) both the Son and Successor of *Anastasius*

[a] Ad ann. 412. N. 25.
[b] Hier. Ep. 8.

naſtaſius the preceeding Pope: He was a Man of Learning, Subtilty, and great Addreſs, and ſeems to have been the firſt of the *Roman* Pontiffs, who laid Claim even to the *Primacy*, (for the Word *Supremacy* was not known in theſe Days) as by *divine Right* belonging to his See. They had indeed before this Time held the Primacy by Canons, as Biſhops of the firſt City; but *Innocent*, not content with this, would needs go higher, he muſt hold by a new Charter, and (changing the ancient Foundations of the Primacy) claimed it, *as Succeſſor of St.* Peter, the *Prince of the Apoſtles*, Language not uſed by his humbler Predeceſſors, and (for ought appears) not heard in the World before the the 5th Century.

In the 416, the Biſhops of (Proper) *Africa*, aſſembled in Council at *Carthage*, and thoſe of *Numidia*, at *Milevum* or *Mela*. By theſe Councils, the Hereſy of *Pelagius*, and of his Diſciple *Cæleſtius*, was condemned, and Letters written to *Innocent*, acquainting him therewith, and deſiring him to add the Authority of the apoſtolick See to theirs. Theſe two Letters were accompanied by a third, ſigned by St. *Auguſtine*, and four other Biſhops, to inform *Innocent* in a friendly Manner, " that he was ſuſpected

" ſpected of countenancing theſe Heretiçks " and favouring their Doctrine; and the more " to guard againſt this Danger, they ſent him " at the ſame Time St. *Auguſtine*'s Confuta- " tion of a Book of *Pelagius*, and the Book " itſelf, with the Paſſages marked in it that " gave moſt Offence, and claimed a parti- " cular Attention, leſt he ſhould overlook " them [c]."---This was not treating him as an *unerring Judge*, for his Infallibility by itſelf (had they known of it) muſt have prevented all Miſtake and Overſight, without the Aſſiſtance of their officious Care.

Theſe Letters brought *Innocent* into Difficulties, from which a Man of leſs Addreſs could not ſo eaſily have extricated himſelf; he ſaw his high Claim was not yet ripe to bear an open Struggle for it, and yet he was unwilling to give it up; and therefore he concurs in the Condemnation of *Pelagius*, and writes Anſwers to theſe Letters, in a ſly, ſmooth, cajoling Strain, complimenting thoſe Biſhops upon the Reſpect they had ſhewed to his See, as if they had asked his Leave, before they proceeded to judge a Heretick.---" Ye have well obſerved, " ſays he, the Ordinances of the ancient Fa-

[c] Aug. Ep. 90. 95. Poſſid. vit. Aug. cap. 18.

" thers, and not trampled under Foot, " what they *not in human Wiſdom, but by* " *divine Order, have eſtabliſhed*, viz. that " whatever is done, in Places however re- " mote, ſhould, for a final Concluſion, be " referred to the apoſtolick See."-----This indeed was a broad Hint, and carries an Air of Sovereignty ; but how much, or rather how little they minded it, we ſhall ſee preſently.

Innocent dying ſoon after, that is, in the Year 417, is ſucceeded by *Zoſimus* ; *Cæleſtius* renews to him his Appeal from the Sentence of the *African* Biſhops, and preſents a Confeſſion of his Faith, which *Zoſimus* approves, and writes to *Aurelius* Biſhop of *Carthage*, and the other *African* Biſhops, complaining of their Haſte and Precipitancy in an Affair that required the moſt mature Deliberation : As for *Heros* and *Lazarus*, the two great Oppoſers of *Pelagius* and *Cæleſtius*, he inveighs againſt them with Words of Bitterneſs, letting the *African* Biſhops know, that if the Accuſers of *Cæleſtius* did not appear at *Rome*, in two Months, to make good their Charge againſt him, he would declare him innocent.---And accordingly he afterwards proceeded to depoſe and excommunicate theſe two Biſhops, *i. e. Heros* of *Arles*, and *Lazarus* of *Aix* in *Provence* ;

Provence; notwithſtanding St. *Auguſtine*, and other Writers of that Time, give them very good Characters; and even *Baronius* confeſſes, that the Crimes with which *Zoſimus* charged them, were only the Suggeſtions of their Enemies [d].

The Caſe being thus brought to a Criſis, I beg Leave to make a few obvious Remarks upon it: 1*ſt*, Here are two Popes taking contrary Sides in the ſame Queſtion, and that a Queſtion of Hereſy; *Innocent* condemning *Pelagius* and *Cæleſtius*, and his immediate Succeſſor in the Chair, condemning the Adverſaries of *Pelagius* and *Cæleſtius*: Which of theſe two Popes was infallible? for both could not.

2*dly*, The other Biſhops of that Time ſeem to have made no Account of the Anathemas of *Zoſimus*, for they ſtill continued to communicate with *Heros* and *Lazarus*, and owned them for their Collegues [e]. And we are told, that the Name of *Heros* was inſerted into the Diptychs of the Church of *Arles*, after his Death; and that *Lazarus* was reſtored to his See [f].

[d] Aug. ad Bon. lib. 2. cap. 3. & de pecc. orig. cap. 6. Merc. comment. cap. 1. Bar. ad ann. 417. N. 19. to N. 29.

[e] Merc. comment. cap. 3.

[f] Gallia Chriſtiana, cap. 1. p. 2.

Where was now the Biſhop of *Rome*'s Supremacy and univerſal Juriſdiction?

3*dly*, The Biſhops of *Africa* (regardleſs of the Pope's Authority) ſtill adhered to what they had done in this Matter; a Council of 214 Biſhops aſſembled at *Carthage*, condemned again the Doctrine of *Pelagius* and *Cæleſtius*, and their Decrees (ſays *Proſper* [g]) were received by all the World, though in making theſe Decrees the *Roman* Pontiff had no Hand: So it was not *Rome*, but *Africa*, it was not the Pope, but the Biſhops of *Africa*, or I may rather ſay St. *Auguſtine*, (for he entirely governed that Council) who taught the Church, what to believe, and what to reject, concerning Grace and original Sin.

4*thly*, Not content to have done ſo much, they went further: In the following Year, (that is, in 418) another Council of 225 Biſhops (from all the Provinces of *Africa*, and ſome even from *Spain*) was aſſembled at *Carthage*, where (the more effectually to defeat any Attempts of *Zoſimus* in Favour of *Pelagius* and *Cæleſtius*) they condemned their Doctrine anew, and more diſtinctly than they had hitherto done; and among the eighteen Canons enacted by this Council,

[g] Chron. lib. 1. cap. 2. 3.

cil, there is one has a very ill Aſpect on the Juriſdiction (and conſequently on the Infallibility) of the See of *Rome*, *viz.* "Prieſts, "Deacons, and Clergymen, if they com-"plain of the Judgment paſſed on them "by their own Biſhop, may (with his "Conſent) be heard by the neighbour-"ing Biſhops, and if they think fit to ap-"peal from them, let them appeal to the "*Primates of their Provinces.---But let not* "*him that thinks fit to appeal to them beyond* "*Sea, be admitted to Communion by any in* "Africk [i]."

This was a ſmart Blow, directly aimed at the See of *Rome*; one would think *Carthage* was the Place deſigned by Providence to check the exorbitant Growth of Power in Chriſtian *Rome*, as it had done in Heathen *Rome* about 500 Years before.

And it muſt not be forgot, that St. *Auguſtine* was preſent in this Council, and ſigned this with the other Decrees. I had almoſt ſaid, he was the *Hannibal* of *Africk* at this Time.

Theſe *African* Decrees were approved by the Emperor *Honorius*, who iſſued a penal Law againſt the *Pelagians*, dated at *Ravenna*, 30th of *April* 418.---And at laſt the

[i] Afric. cod. can. 28. Gr. 31. Nor. hiſt. Pel. lib. 1. cap. 17.

the Biſhop of *Rome*, (the ſame *Zoſimus*) finding the Oppoſition ſo ſtrong, thought fit to lower his Top-ſail, and tack about; he now condemned the Confeſſion of Faith he had approved before; he confirms the Sentence of the *Africans*, which he had ſo ſharply cenſured, and excommunicates *Pelagius* and *Cæleſtius*, "if they did not abjure the poiſonous Tenets of their impious and abominable Sect [k].----Was *Zoſimus* infallible all the while?

The ſame *Zoſimus* had a Squabble with ſome of the Biſhops of *Gaul*, about a Matter of leſs Importance, in which he ſucceeded no better; particularly with *Proculus* Biſhop of *Marſeilles*, who (not convinced of the Biſhop of *Rome*'s Infallibility, or univerſal Juriſdiction) continued to the laſt to diſpute his uſurped Authority, and deſpiſe his random Cenſures; for he performed epiſcopal Offices, and ordained a Biſhop, even after the Pope had depoſed and excommunicated him [l].-----But as St. *Auguſtine* had no direct Concern in this Quarrel, I forbear to inſiſt on it.

This ſhort *Abſtract* contains (ſo far as it goes) a true and well vouched Account of

[k] Aug. pecc. orig. cap. 3. 4. Id. ad Bon. lib. 2. cap. 3. & in Jul. lib. 1. cap. 4.

[l] Du Pin, v. 3. p. 209.

of the Sentiments, and Conduct of St. *Auguſtine*, as to the Point in Queſtion: And upon a careful Review of this Section, and of the Authorities referred to, I will ſubmit to the Judgment of the Reader, "Whether "this learned Biſhop did believe, or ever "ſubmitted to, or ever endeavoured to ſup- "port the Infallibility, or univerſal Juriſ- "diction of the Church of *Rome*?

§ VI. Having thus examined ſo many of our Author's chief Authorities, and found none of them concluding any thing to the Purpoſe for which he brings them, I might be excuſed from taking any Trouble about the remaining two.-----For it can ſcarce be thought that two Writers ſo late as the 5th Century, can have Weight and Authority ſufficient to eſtabliſh a Doctrine of ſuch Importance, untaught in the Scriptures, and unheard of in the early Ages of the Church. But, as we are obliged to "cut off Occaſi- "on from them that ſeek Occaſions againſt "us," that my learned Adverſaries may not think themſelves neglected, or any Part of their Argument (induſtriouſly) overlooked, as if it contained ſomething unanſwerable, I will very briefly conſider theſe two laſt alſo.

It

It is ſomewhat alarming to find *Vincentius Lirinenſis* brought into the Field againſt us: An unwary Reader may be apt to ſuſpect our Danger great, and our Cauſe deſperate, when he ſees ſo good an old Friend brought to muſter on the Enemies Side. We Proteſtants have often appealed to *Vincentius*, offered to ſubmit all Matters in Diſpute between the Church of *Rome* and us, to his Arbitration, and to have the Cauſe judged and finally determined by his Golden Rule of *Antiquity*, *Univerſality*, *and Conſent*; and is he now turned againſt us? No, but our Author, like a (Thunder Shower) comes with Violence, ſweeps all clean before him, and would not leave remaining to us ſo much as one poor *Monk* at *Lerins*, to keep us in Countenance.

But what does *Vincentius* ſay againſt Proteſtants? He ſays, " the *Church of Chriſt* is " a diligent and *faithful Preſerver* of the " *Doctrines depoſited with her*, never alter- " ing, adding, or loſing any thing."----And this (ſays our Author) cannot be ſaid of the Church, unleſs ſhe be infallible.----No? Pray'e may not a Man be honeſt and virtuous, unleſs it was impoſſible for him to be a Rogue? What then becomes of the Doctrine of Merit? May not a Man enjoy good Health for many Years, though he had

had the Seeds and Principles of Diſeaſes and Death in him all the while? Or (to ſpeak in Scripture Stile) may not "the "faithful City become an Harlot? *Iſa.* i. "21."

But unluckily for our Author, *Vincentius* ſpeaks here only of the *Church of Chriſt*, or the whole catholick Church; and this is already ſhewed to be a Society very different (in Point both of Extent and Authority) from the *Roman Catholick*: So that he might by the ſame Logick conclude, that the Powers and Privileges of a Sheriff are equal to thoſe of King and Parliament, or of a provincial Synod to thoſe of an œcumenical Council.

But further, let it be ſuppoſed that *Vincentius* had ſaid, "the *Church of Rome* is a "faithful Preſerver of the Doctrines depo-"ſited with her;"----this might vouch her Fidelity, but not her Infallibility, in preſerving the Doctrines at firſt depoſited with her; but then, if the Doctrines of her Infallibility and univerſal Juriſdiction, were not at firſt depoſited with her, (which by this Time is made pretty clear) ſhe is not obliged to preſerve theſe Doctrines, on the contrary, ſhe ought, for the Sake of Truth and Peace, to give them up; and as it is evident ſhe has not theſe Powers and Privile-

ges, ſhe ought to diſclaim, and lay down the ſaucy, miſchievous, bare Pretence to them.

Had *Vincentius* meant any thing in Favour of *Romiſh* Infallibility, it is quite inconceivable how he ſhould not have once mentioned it, when he had ſo fair an Opportunity; when he wrote a Book (and a very wiſe good one it is) on Purpoſe to give plain, certain Rules, for the Detection and Avoidance of Hereſies and Errors, how natural was it, how eaſy had it been, to have ſent us to the *living infallible Judge* at *Rome*? but there is never a Word of him in all that elaborate Work: Inſtead of that he ſends us far about to conſult Antiquity, Univerſality, and Conſent, and, if any Doubt remains, to be determined by the Opinion of the greateſt and wiſeſt Men, in different Times and Places.-----But no Mention of *Rome*, or of a *viſible unerring Decider* of Controverſies, reſiding there.——A Proteſtant would have given the ſame Advice he does.

As for St. *Cyril*, Patriarch of *Alexandria*, I have already, in a former Part of this Chapter, (Pages 158, 159) conſidered the Quotation brought from him, and found it no more to the Purpoſe for which it is brought, than that from *Vincentius*, or any of

of the reſt, and therefore ſhall not weary the Reader, or myſelf, on this Article.

Only, as I have on other Occaſions taken the Liberty to reprove the Author of the *Shorteſt Way* for ſome Inſtances of unfair Dealing, I think it is a Juſtice I owe him in this Place, to commend his Virtue, and Ingenuity, in not ſuffering his Zeal to miſlead him to the copying another Paſſage from the ſame St. *Cyril*, which (had it been a true one) would have ſpoke more home, and to the Point, than all the eight hitherto produced.

The Paſſage I mean, is (in the 13th Century) urged by St. *Thomas Aquinas*, in his *Catena* upon St. *Matthew*, and on his Credit, is alledged by *Urban* IV. for the the ſame Purpoſe, *viz.* "We muſt remain "as Members in our Head, in the *apoſto-* "*lick Throne* of the *Roman Biſhops*, from "whom we ought to requeſt whatſoever is "neceſſary to be believed and held, having "a particular Reſpect for him,----to whom "all the Faithful are obliged (by *divine* "*Right*) to be *ſubject*."

This, if it were really St. *Cyril*'s, would bid as fair to prove the Infallibility and univerſal Paſtorſhip of the Biſhop of *Rome*, as the Opinion of any one Author ſo late as the 5th Century; but, unfortunately for

the Cauſe, the moſt accurate Criticks, even of the *Roman* Communion, acknowledge it to be falſe, feigned, and forged.---The celebrated *Du Pin* [a] ſays, "That St. *Thomas* quotes the Works of the Fathers "with great Careleſſneſs and little Judg-"ment;---that it appears he had never ſeen "St. *Cyril*'s *Theſaurus*, becauſe he quotes (for this very Paſſage) the ſecond Book of "that Work, which was never divided in-"to Books."----That it could not poſſibly "enter into the *Theſaurus* of St. *Cyril*, which "is nothing but a Contexture of Texts "and Arguments upon the Trinity; that "none of all the *Greek* or *Latin* Fathers "ever ſpoke thus, or ever flattered the Bi-"ſhop of *Rome* at this Rate."---And upon the whole, he pronounces the Quotation *ſuppoſititious*.----And as ſuch I leave it.

Having thus proved (by the cleareſt and ſtrongeſt Evidence) that the holy *Fathers* of the Chriſtian Church, in the early Ages, and down even to the 5th Century, neither taught, believed, or fancied any *Infallibility*, or *univerſal Juriſdiction*, to be lodged in the *Church of Rome*, I muſt ſtop here, as my Author's Argument goes no farther; otherwiſe

[a] Dr Pin, vol. 4. p. 29.

therwiſe it had not been difficult to have carried on the Evidence to later Ages.

In the Period I have been treating of, even the Biſhops of *Rome* themſelves, ſeem not to have known any thing (for ought appears) of this high Privilege of abſolute Immunity from Error, claimed by their Succeſſors in later Times. It is true, that in the Beginning of the 5th Century, Pope *Innocent* I. begun to claim a more extenſive Juriſdiction, and to talk in a higher Strain, (not of his Infallibility indeed, but) " of the Privileges of " the apoſtolick See of St. *Peter*, the Prince " of the Apoſtles," than his humbler Predeceſſors had done; and ſome of his Succeſſors in that See followed his Example; but with how little Succeſs they dealt at firſt, we have already ſeen, and that their Fellow Biſhops of thoſe Times oppoſed their bold Pretenſions, and depiſed their blunt Cenſures.

It muſt indeed be owned, that in the later and darker Ages, their Juriſdiction became more extended, and their high Claims farther ſubmitted to, not for any Evidence of Truth, and Right, or any Weight of Argument brought to ſupport them, but by Force of Power, and Fetches of Policy: Yet even in thoſe worſt Ages, there was ſtill an Oppoſition made to their Encroachments

ments and Uſurpations, in ſome one Part or other of the catholick Church of Chriſt.

If I was not fore-cloſed by theſe Gentlemens ſhutting up their Argument at the 5th Century, or, if it would not run this little Eſſay to undue Length, it were eaſy to ſhew this by a Variety of Inſtances. *E. G.*

That in the 6th Age, *Vigilius*, Biſhop of *Rome*, changed his Opinion of the Books of *Theodorus*, *Theodoret*, and *Ibas*, (well known by the Name of the *three Chapters*) relating to the *Neſtorian Hereſy*, no leſs than three or four Times, and was as often oppoſed and excommunicated by the Eaſtern and Weſtern Churches in their Turns, which was not uſing him as Head of the whole Church, or as infallible [b].

That in the 7th Age, *Honorius* then Biſhop of *Rome*, was condemned by the 6th general Council, (and that Sentence ratified by the 7th and 8th Councils) "for contradicting the apoſtolical Doctrine, and the "Definitions of Councils, and for following the falſe Doctrines of Hereticks."—— Nay his own Succeſſor *Leo* II. anathematizes him as *a Betrayer of the catholick Faith.*

That in the 8th Age, *Adrian*, Biſhop of *Rome*, approved the 2d Council of *Nice*, which

[b] Facund. lib. 4. cap. 3. & nov. collect. conc. p. 1551. Du Pin, vol. 6. & Id. hiſt. of 8th Cent.

which enacted the Worſhip of Images, but was therein oppoſed by the Weſtern Biſhops, as being *contrary to Faith*, which they could not have done, had they conſidered him as the Head and Center of catholick Communion.

That in the 9th Age, happened the great Breach (never yet made up) between the Patriarchs of *Rome* and *Conſtantinople*: This Difference turned chiefly upon two Points, *viz.* Juriſdiction, and the Addition to the Creed made by the Weſtern Church. By this unhappy Diſpute, the whole Church was ſplit, four Patriarchs againſt one, ſo that the Balance ſtill lies againſt *Rome*. Pope *Nicolas* I. employed the beſt Pens they had, to defend the *Latins* againſt the *Greeks*: One of theſe was *Bertram Ratramnus*, a very learned Monk of *Corby*, and it is obſervable in him, that "he ſup-" poſes both Churches (Eaſtern and Weſt-" ſtern) to be ſtill Parts of the catholick " Church; and he often diſtinguiſhes the " *Latin Church*, or the whole *Roman* Com-" munion, from the *catholick Church*, which " (he ſays) was extended from the Eaſt to " the Weſt, from the North to the South.

That in the 11th Age, this Quarrel was carried on with great Heat and Violence, in the Time of *Leo* IX. of *Rome*, and *Mi-*

chael

chael Cerularius of *Conſtantinople*.——They excommunicated one another, and their reſpective Churches *hinc inde*.——And yet, in the Biſhop of *Rome*'s Anathema againſt the *Greeks*, one of the Reaſons aſſigned is, "that the *Greeks*, like the *Donatiſts*, con-"fined the catholick Church to themſelves."

That in the 13th Age, *Innocent* III. (the Pope to whom King *John* of *England* made his Kingdom feudatory) wrote to the *Greek* Emperor, to bring *the* Greeks *back to the Unity of the catholick Church*: To which the Patriarch of *Conſtantinople* returns an Anſwer, deſiring "to know what "he meant by it, and how he could call "the *Roman* Church, the whole catholick "Church, ſince Chriſtians made but *one* "*Flock under their ſeveral Paſtors, Chriſt* "*himſelf being Head over all.*"

That in the 15th Age, the Cardinal *Beſſarion*, (in the Council of *Florence*) diſputing about the Authority of the *Roman* Church, in making an Addition to the Creed, ſays, "that how great ſoever the "Power of the *Roman* Church be, he "grants it is leſs than that of a general "Council, or of the catholick Church [c]."

In

[c] Con. Florent. Seſſ. 9.

In the ſame Age, the Council of *Conſtance* charged Pope *John* XXII. "with "frequent pertinacious Denials of the Im- "mortality of the Soul."——It is true, *Bellarmine* ſays this was not proved againſt him, but only ſuſpected, becauſe of the Diſſoluteneſs of his Life.----This does not mend the Matter much, for it plainly acknowledges a miſtaken Council, and a very vicious Pope.

The ſame Council of *Conſtance*, in their fourth Seſſion, declare, "That a general "Council repreſents the catholick Church, "and hath its Power immediately from "Chriſt, and that in Matters of Faith, "Unity of the Church, and Reformation, "all Perſons, even Popes themſelves, are "bound to ſubmit to it."

This Narrative might be brought a little farther down, but I avoid here to tread upon the Toes of the Council of *Trent*, tho' I may poſſibly take a View of it afterwards. At preſent I ſhall only obſerve, that this Doctrine of the Council of *Conſtance* was confirmed by the Council of *Baſil*, and is ſtill maintained by the Clergy of *France*, as appears by their Declaration in 1682.

I beg the Reader's Pardon for having gone ſo far beyond my Line; I had ſome

Reaſon for it. The witty Author of the *Shorteſt Way* [a] crows over poor Proteſtants, as being utterly deſtitute of Foundation, or the leaſt Countenance from Antiquity: "It "was for this Reaſon (ſays he, with his "wonted Modeſty and Veracity) that *Lu-* "*ther* no ſooner began his pretended Re- "formation, but he declared open War a- "gainſt the *Fathers*.----For he could not "but be againſt *Antiquity*, when *Antiqui-* "*ty* was againſt him." And I have long known it a Calumny very common in the Mouths of Popiſh Miſſionaries, "that we "have no Antiquity on our Side in this "Queſtion, nor any Author of Learning "or Character, but ſince the Time of *Lu-* "*ther*."-----I thought therefore it was incumbent on me, and not at all from the Purpoſe of my Argument, thus briefly to deduce the Senſe of the *Chriſtian Church*, from the apoſtolick Age downward, almoſt to our own, and that collected not merely from the Writings, or uncertain Sayings of particular Men, but from the publick, ſolemn and undoubted Acts of the Church.

I will now cloſe this Chapter (which has run to more Length than I intended) with the Words of one of our learned Adverſaries,

[a] P. 40. 39.

verſaries, the Author of the *Shorteſt Way*, &c. " And now (ſays he [b]) I leave it to " the Judgment of any impartial Reader, " whether the *Fathers* I have quoted were " *Proteſtants* or *Papiſts* in their Principle, " relating to the Matter under Debate;---- " and, whether the primitive Church did " not underſtand the Promiſes of Chriſt, " which are the ſole Foundation of her *In-* " *fallibility*, in the ſame Senſe as *Roman* " Catholicks do now?"---So ſay I too; and do very chearfully make the ſame Reference to the Judgment of the candid, unbiaſſed Reader, when (with Attention, and without Prejudice) he has read what this Gentleman and I have written on the Subject; earneſtly begging of God to guide him (by his holy Spirit) into the Knowledge and Confeſſion of the Truth, on which Side ſoever of the Queſtion he finds it [c].

[b] Part 1. p. 49.

[c] Iſa. i. 21. Du Pin, vol. 4. p. 29. Facund. lib. 4. cap. 3. Nov. collect. conc. p. 1551. Du Pin, vol. 6. and Hiſt. of the 8th Cent. Con. Fer. & Florent. ſeſſ. 9. Short. Way, Part 1. p. 40. 39.

CHAP. V.

In which our Author's Argument from Councils, and the conſtant Practice of the Church, in condemning and anathematizing Hereſies, at their firſt Riſe, is examined; and his Parallel between Proteſtants and ancient Hereticks, is ſhewed to be equally falſe, illogical, and malicious.

IT is common with Men, who are reſolved not to be convinced, *to multiply Words without Knowledge* [d], juſt as they that are ſinking lay hold on the firſt Twig that comes in their Way. Our Author, ſenſible (I ſuppoſe) that neither Scriptures nor Fathers would uphold his Caſtle in the Air, his chimerical Fabrick of *Roman* Infallibility, muſt needs try what Councils, and the conſtant *Practice* of the Church may do; juſt as a Hare, long run, comes back to where ſhe firſt ſtarted, and is killed there.

Thus in the 15th Paragraph of the Manuſcript, our Author ſays, "Beſides the "particular Teſtimonies of the Fathers, "the Sentiments of all Antiquity about the "*unerring*

[d] Job, xxxv. 16.

" *unerring Authority of the Church*, appears " by the *continual Practice of the Church*, " in condemning the different Hereſies " and Errors that aroſe in every Age; " for they were all condemned at their firſt " Appearance by the Church, and her " Paſtors, either aſſembled in *Councils*, *or* " *without calling Councils*, they all concur- " ring in their Judgment on the Matters " controverted. And the Paſtors inviolably " maintained the Definitions which they " had once made, anathematizing all theſe " who diſſented from them, without al- " lowing them any Appeal to the Scriptures " interpreted by their own private Judg- " ment, and inſerting their Deciſions into " the very Creeds, or Profeſſions of Faith, " *as the firſt four general Councils did.* Now " this perpetual Practice of the Church, e- " ven in all *her pureſt Ages*, evidently " ſpeaks the Senſe of the Church with re- " gard to her own *Infallibility*; how could " ſhe otherwiſe oblige all to aſſent to her " Decrees, and anathematize all Diſſenters? " There are not wanting ſpecious Pretexts " upon many Occaſions to the new Here- " ticks (as in the Caſe of the *Arians*, *Mace-* " *donians*, &c.) from Scripture, Fathers, and " Reaſon, which, abſtracting from the *Au-* " *thority of the living Paſtors of the Church*,

" rendered

" rendered the Controverſy obſcure and dif-
" ficult."

The Drift of this whole Argument, is to convince us of the abſolute Neceſſity of a conſtant, *living*, *infallible Judge* in every Age, to decide Controverſies as ſoon as they ariſe, whoſe Deciſions ſhall be implicitely ſubmitted to; conſequently that we owe the ſame profound Reſpect, and implicite Submiſſion to the Decrees of the Council of *Trent*, confirmed by the Pope, (which was the living infallible Judge in the 16th Century) that is due to the four firſt general Councils, or any Council whatever, not excepting that at *Jeruſalem*, (*Acts* 15.) for it was but infallible, and Pope *Pius*, with his *Trent Council*, claim no lower. And therefore, that we Proteſtants, for refuſing that implicite Submiſſion to the Decrees of *Trent*, confirmed by the Pope, are obſtinate, incorrigible Hereticks, juſtly anathematized, and cut off from all the Means and Hope of Salvation, unleſs we ſubmit to that unerring Authority.

The more diſtinctly to clear our ſelves of the dreadful Charge brought againſt us, in this and the following Paragraphs of the Manuſcript, I will divide this Chapter (as I have done the preceeding) into Sections.

§ I.

§ I. Any one, looking upon this Paragraph, and going no deeper than the Surface, would expect our Author was to lodge the *Infallibility in Councils*; and if he had done that plainly and peremptorily at firſt, this Eſſay had been much ſhorter; becauſe he might have been referred to thoſe of his own Communion, who have appeared againſt that Opinion, by reſtricting that Privilege to the Pope, (as the *Jeſuits* do) and yet (as they are wont to ſpeak) are good Catholicks ſtill.

The *great Authority of Councils truly geneneral and free*, is *acknowledged*, that they are the ſupreme Court in the Church on Earth, the laſt Reſort of eccleſiaſtical Authority. And if there could be *no Authority without Infallibility* too, this Author had ſaid ſomething very ſtrong; but if theſe two can be diſtinct, ſo as the one may be without the other, if an Authority may be ſupreme, without being infallible, then he has ſaid nothing to the Purpoſe: And yet it will be found this is the Caſe, that every ſovereign Prince in his own Dominions, and every Biſhop in his own Dioceſe, has Authority, nay, divine and ſupreme Authority, and yet neither of them is infallible.

But let it be ſuppoſed for once, that a *general Council is infallible*, even that would

would not ſerve the Purpoſe for which *Romaniſts* claim it, as neceſſary in their Church, that is, as a perpetual living Judge, or Decider of Controverſies. It is now many hundreds of Years ſince there was any ſuch thing in the Church, as could challenge that venerable Name, any Council that could be called either *general* or *free*; for the Aſſembly at *Trent* was *neither*, (as I may come to ſhew afterwards) but compoſed of only a few Biſhops, ſome of them but titular, (without any Portion of the Flock of Chriſt committed to their Care) and all of them the Pope's Creatures; ſome of the greateſt Bodies, even in the *Roman* Communion, ſtood aloof from it, as expecting no Good to the Church from that packed Synod, while the Influence and Practices of the *Court* of *Rome* upon the few Members of which it was compoſed, were at once too baſe to be juſtified, and too open to be denied; ſo that it will never bear the Teſt of Day Light.

And as there has been no general Council theſe many Centuries paſt, ſo it is likely there never will be any, unleſs the Church of *Rome* would abate of her Pride and Pretenſions, and let them act with Freedom, and without Corruption, which is rather to be wiſhed than expected: So that if we ſhould

ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe this Infallibility to be lodged in Councils, general and free, yet the Church may juſtly apprehend ſhe has in a great Meaſure loſt it.

But it is worthy of Notice, that the Church was conſtituted, the holy Scriptures were received, many Hereſies were rejected, and the Perſecutions were gone through, in a Courſe of three hundred Years; in all which Time, there was nothing that could pretend to be called a general Council, unleſs it was that one at *Jeruſalem* (*Acts* 15.) mentioned before.

And when the Ages came, in which Councils were frequent, though great Eſteem and Reverence is due to the *four general Councils*, yet it muſt be acknowledged, that their Deciſions did not extinguiſh the Hereſies they condemned; ſo far were Controverſies from being ended by them, that they broke out with Violence after them; as the *Arian* Controverſy after the Council of *Nice*, the *Neſtorian* after that of *Epheſus*; and the *Eutychian* Controverſy gave greater Diſturbance after the Council of *Chalcedon*, than before, and continued ſo to do, for Ages.

I do not mean by this to inſinuate that general Councils have been of no Value or Uſefulneſs, that is very remote from my Intention; as their Authority is great, ſo

their Proceedings have had a powerful and good, though not a ſudden, Effect.

But then it is fit to obſerve, that neither the *Councils* themſelves, (who may be ſuppoſed to have beſt underſtood the Extent of their own *Authority*) nor they who wrote in Defence of their *Decrees*, (who may be ſuppoſed well enough inclined to magnify that Authority) neither of theſe, I ſay, ever pretended to argue for their Opinions, from the *Infallibility* of thoſe Councils that paſt Decrees in Favour of them, and condemned the contrary.----They do indeed ſpeak of them with juſt Regard, as Bodies of Men that were guided or aſſiſted by the Spirit of God; and ſo do we think, not only of them, but of ſeveral others that were eminently holy and good, even of ſome of the *Reformers*, however much deſpiſed, and often damned they have been, by the *Roman* Pontifs. A very grand Aſſembly once declared, that the Compilers of the *Engliſh* Liturgy were "guided or aſſiſted by "the Spirit of God;"----but we do not aſcribe Infallibility to them, and no more did they. They reverenced and ſubmitted to theſe *Councils* (as we ſtill do) for the Sake of their Doctrine, and its Conformity to the Scriptures of Truth; but they did

did not believe the Doctrine merely for the Authority of Councils.

This was evidently the Judgment of St. *Auguſtine* in this Matter, as appears from a Letter of his, addreſſed "to his holy "Brother and Co-presbyter *Jerome* [a]:— "I have learned (ſays he) to give this Ho- "nour and Reverence to the Books of ſa- "cred Scripture, (which we call *canonical*) "to believe there is no Error in them; but "as for others, (how learned or godly ſo- "ever they be) I ſo read them, that I do "not believe any thing to be true, becauſe "they thought ſo, but becauſe (by the "Scriptures, or by good Reaſon and Ar- "gument) they proved it to be ſo."

But, to give our Author's Argument its utmoſt Scope, let it be ſuppoſed once more, that *general Councils* were *infallible*, and that their Decrees were to be received ſolely upon Account of their *Authority*, and without any other Voucher, yet, muſt we not examine what theſe Decrees are? Muſt we not examine, whether the Councils, which formed theſe Definitions and Decrees, were general or not? If this Privilege is denied us, then we muſt ſuſtain the Councils at *Sirmium*, at *Rimini*, and the ſecond of

[a] Aug. ad Hieron. Ep. 19. tom. 2.

Epheſus; and by this Means, *Arianiſm*, or *Semi-arianiſm*, and *Eutychianiſm*, muſt be implicitely received. But if this Privilege is granted us, then (I am afraid) there is more Work found, (and more Authority too) for that condemned Faculty of *private Judgment*, than this Gentleman would incline to allow.

Our learned Author, no Doubt, foreſaw theſe Difficulties in his Way, and that they were unconquerable, had he ſtuck by the *Councils* ſimply; and therefore he wiſely provides a Salvo, and keeps the Key of a Back-door to get out at, by ſaying "the "Hereſies were all condemned by the "Church and her Paſtors, *either aſſembled* "*in Councils, or without calling Councils.*" ——So here we are juſt where we were before. Infallibility he muſt have, but where, he is loth to tell us. Somewhere it muſt be, if it be at all, either in Councils, or out of Councils, either in the Church collective, or diſtributive; and if he would believe ſome of his own Communion, (who think themſelves as wiſe, learned, and orthodox as he is) it is in none of all theſe, but in the Pope.——This ſhuffling backward and forward, is really turning the Argument into a Farce, ſomewhat like Childrens Play at *Bo-peep*.

But

But I am at a loſs to find out the Meaning of this, *without calling of Councils*. If he intends to lodge this Privilege in the *Church diffuſive*, ſo as to make the Paſtors infallible in their ſingle Capacities, this is more than was ever yet contended for, unleſs it be by *Quakers*, or ſuch Pretenders to immediate Impulſes of the Spirit. I ſuppoſe therefore, that he means only the *united Judgment* of the *whole Body* of the Paſtors, for ſo he ſeems to explain it, *they all concurring in their Judgment on the Matters controverted.*

Thus, after hard Labour, the Mountain has brought forth a Mouſe. Thus our Author has with much Pains placed Things at laſt, where we always choſe to have them, and have endeavoured to keep them, that is, in the conſtant catholick Practice, and Doctrine of the Church in all Ages and Places, which is *Vincentius*'s Rule mentioned before.

To this excellent *Rule* we hold, and are content to be tried by it, in all Matters controverted between the Church of *Rome* and us: But if that Church had not been ſenſible, that her new Articles would never ſtand this Teſt, it is probable ſo much Noiſe had not been made about her *Infallibility*, which was only deviſed in later Times, to

ſupport

ſupport a crazy tottering Fabrick, not to be kept up by other Means.——Had Scripture, Antiquity or Reaſon, furniſhed Supports to their new Doctrines, they wanted not Men of Learning, Induſtry and Zeal to have found out and applied them.——But deſtitute of other Props, they deviſed this weighty Buttreſs, (as is done for other Buildings upon Sand, where they dare not go to the Foundation) and when it fails (as it ſeems declining faſt) it will add to the Rubbiſh, and great will the Ruin be.

Our Author goes on to acquaint us, that "this was the perpetual Practice of the "Church, even in all the *pureſt Ages*."---Pureſt Ages! I am afraid the Gentleman has been ſlumbering, or this Expreſſion had been more guarded.——*Homer* himſelf nods ſometimes.——For if his Church is equally *infallible* in all Ages, ſhe muſt be equally *pure* in all Ages too.

However he goes on to tell his *Catechumen*, that "this perpetual Practice evidently ſpeaks the Senſe of the Church, with "*regard to her own Infallibility*."——No ſuch Thing; it only ſpeaks her Senſe, with regard to her own *Authority*; and it is already ſhewed, that theſe are diſtinct Things: For if Infallibility and Authority are convertible Terms, and mean the ſame Thing, then

then every Church upon Earth is as infallible as the *Roman*, becauſe every Church has Authority; and it is the perpetual Practice of all Churches, to exclude from their Communion, ſuch as will not come up to their Terms.

Well, but (ſays our Author) "If the "Church was not infallible, how could ſhe "otherwiſe oblige all to aſſent to her De"crees, and *anathematize all Diſſenters.*"—Here indeed he has hit the Mark, and drove the Nail to the Head; for it muſt be owned that if a Church's Infallibility was to be found out by the Number of her *Anathemas*, the Church of *Rome* would have ſtronger Pretenſions to it, than any other Church upon Earth has, or ever had. She is ſo liberal of her *Curſings*, and diſpenſes them with ſo open and undiſtinguiſhing a Hand, that very often, (once a Year at leaſt) her own Sons come in for a Share of her Maledictions, with thoſe that are without; and if this Gentleman would but conſider ſeriouſly the *bulla cœnæ Domini*, (which is with much Ceremony pronounced from St. *Peter's* Church every *Maunday Thurſday*) he might poſſibly find himſelf, as well as the great Body of the *Gallican* Church, (thoſe *hæretici tolerati*) comprehended in it.

It would not be unuſeful to ſhew, how much

much the Church of *Rome* has improved in curſing, by ſtating a Compariſon between the *Anathemas* of the primitive Church, and their many diſtinct, particular Curſes, and direful Imprecations, in later Times [b].—— But as this would afford no Entertainment to the good natured Chriſtian Reader, and as this Paper runs into Length, I forbear it.

I ſhall only obſerve, that this Argument from the Church's *Anathemas*, proceeds in the ſame Manner with the reſt, that is, by *jumbling Authority and Infallibility together.* Let theſe be kept diſtinct, (as they ought) and the Caſe is quite clear.

Every Biſhop, nay any Prieſt (by the Authority of his Biſhop) excommunicates the obſtinate and incorrigible; but is every Biſhop therefore infallible? They are in the right indeed, when they inflict this higheſt of the Church's Cenſures juſtly; but there is an Odds between being *actually right*, and *infallibly ſo.*

Heretical Councils (whereof ſome are already mentioned) obtruded their Definitions and Decrees upon the World, they proſcribed and anathematized all Diſſenters.——I hope our Author will not ſay, they were there-

[b] Vid. text. Roſſenſ. apud Spelman, in gloſſario. verb. *excommunicatio.*

therefore infallible; and if they were not, it is plain that Infallibility is not to be inferred from Anathemas; nor need we ſtand in awe of the *Trent* Council on that Account.

§ II. Having by this Analyſis of our Author's Argument from *Councils*, and the general Practice of the Church, ſhewed plainly, that there is no Solidity, or Strength in it, I might ſtop here; but as I have taken the Liberty to affirm of the *Trentine Council*, that it was *neither general, nor free*, nor has the ſmalleſt Claim to the Reſpect and Submiſſion due to the early Councils, it is fit I give ſome Account of the Grounds and Reaſons of ſo bold a Charge, which (I foreſee) will give Offence to them who are unacquainted with its Hiſtory, and yet have been long accuſtomed to think of it with great Reverence.

This I intend to do, by ſtating a Compariſon (where indeed there is no Parallel) between it and the *four general Councils*, to which moſt of Proteſtants ſubmit, and that in the following Particulars, for the Truth whereof I appeal to the ancient eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians, *Euſebius*, *Socrates*, *Theodoret*, *Evagrius*, *Ruffinus*, *Zonaras*, and to the Acts of the Councils themſelves, ſo far as the

four general Ones are concerned; and for that of *Trent*, to Dr. *Du Pin*'s Account, Father *Paulo*'s Hiſtory, and *William Ranchin* (a learned Lawyer at *Montpelier*) his Review of it; two of them *French*, the other an *Italian*; and all three of the *Roman* Communion; ſo that their Evidence cannot well be controverted by our Adverſaries.

1*ſt*, The *general Councils* were called by the Edicts of them who had (and who alone had) Authority to convocate to one Place eccleſiaſtical Perſons from all Parts of the Chriſtian Church, at leaſt from all Parts of it within the Bounds of the *Roman* Empire, which was then of very great Extent, that is, by the *Authority of the Roman Emperors*. Thus the firſt great Council at *Nice* in *Bithynia*, met in virtue of an Edict of the Emperor *Conſtantine*; the ſecond at *Conſtantinople* by Order of *Theodoſius*; the third at *Epheſus* was called by *Theodoſius* the younger, and *Valentinian*; and the fourth at *Chalcedon* in *Bithynia* by *Valentinian* and *Marcian*.

Bellarmine, and other Advocates for the papal Supremacy, would have us believe, that theſe Councils were called at the *Deſire*, or with the *Conſent* of the *Biſhops of Rome*: If by *Deſire* they mean no more than Intreaties, or humble Requeſts to the Emperors,

Emperors, to convocate theſe Councils, it may be true, for ſeveral other Biſhops requeſted, or deſired the ſame Thing; but if by *Deſire*, they would inſinuate *Authority*, it is not ſo. Thus it is alſo with reſpect to their *Conſent*; if by *Conſent* they mean only their Obedience to the Imperial Edict, every Biſhop, who in Perſon or by Proxy aſſiſted in the Council, may be ſaid to have conſented; but if they mean ſuch a *Conſent of the Pope as was neceſſary to the calling or holding of theſe Councils*, for this there is no Foundation, or Shadow of Proof.

Bellarmine and others who have written on that Side, have taken great Pains to find Evidence of this, and have not ſcrupled to go the Lengths, even of Interpolation, and Forgery, for that Purpoſe [c]. But all their Induſtry and Art will not do: The ancient Hiſtorians, and the Acts of thoſe Councils themſelves, aſſure us of the contrary, and we conſider them as the beſt Vouchers.

Thus *Euſebius* [d] ſays, "That the Emperor ſeeing ſome Troubles in the Church, "called an *Oecumenical Council* of Biſhops "from all Parts to meet at *Nice*, a City "in *Bithynia*; and that they did haſten thither with all imaginable Alacrity, accord-

[c] Vid. Ranchin's Review, l. 3. c. 1. p. 139. *&c.*
[d] Euſeb. de vit. Conſtant. l. 3. c. 6.

" ing to the *Emperor's Order.*" Thus *Theodoret* [e], ſpeaking of *Theodoſius*, ſays "that " being come to the Empire, he reſolved " (above all Things) to provide for the U- " nity of the Church, and to that End *com-* " *manded all Biſhops, of what Dioceſs ſoever,* " *to repair to* Conſtantinople." This is confirmed by a Letter from that Council to the ſame Emperor, wherein they ſay, " ſince the " Time of our aſſembling at *Conſtantinople,* " *by your Command* [f]."

Thus *Evagrius* [g] tells us, " That the " third general Council was conveened at " *Epheſus*, by the Authority of *Theodoſius* " the younger, who at that Time govern- " ed the Eaſtern Empire." *Socrates* ſays ſo too; and the Council itſelf ſays no leſs, only they join *Valentinian* (who then governed in the Weſt) with *Theodoſius*, as appears by a Letter of theirs to the Synod of *Pamphylia*, wherein they ſay " they were aſſem- " bled in Council at *Epheſus*, by the Grace " of God, and by virtue of the Edict of " their moſt *devout Kings*, Lovers of Chriſt, " *&c.*

And as for the fourth general Council, it appears from the Acts of it, that it was con-

[e] Theodor. l. 5. c. 16.
[f] Socrat. l. 7. c. 34.
[g] Evag. l. 1. c. 3.

convocated by Imperial Authority [h]; and that "they had met at *Chalcedon* the Me-"tropolis of *Bithynia*, by the Decree of the "moſt devout and faithful Emperors, *Va-"lentinian* and *Marcian*."

Thus it is evident, that the four general Councils were conveened by Authority of the Emperors; and yet Pope *Gregory* the Great did not look upon this as any Nullity in them, when he ſaid "he *reverenced* them "as he did the four Goſpels."——But ſince his Time, they have learned to ſpeak other Language, telling us,——"That Councils "not called by the Pope are illegitimate, "baſtard, void, and of no Effect."----Notwithſtanding this Objection will ly againſt ſome Councils in later Ages, and ſuch as have by themſelves been acknowledged to have been general; even that of *Conſtance* (in the Year 1415) was called by the Emperor *Sigiſmund*, not only without the Pope's Conſent, but againſt his Will.

On the other hand, the *Council of Trent* was called and held by the *ſingle Authority of Pope* Paul III. though there are ſeveral good Reaſons for doubting if he was duly qualified, and furniſhed with Powers ſufficient for that Purpoſe.

It

[h] Act. 1. con. Chal. tom. 1. con.

It has already been ſhewed in this Eſſay, that, according to ancient Canons, the Biſhops of *Rome* could claim no higher than to the firſt Seat amongſt their *Equals*; they were indeed Biſhops of the Imperial City, and Patriarchs of the Weſt; and, allowing that this Dignity gave them Title to preſide in general Councils of the whole Church, (if any ſuch ever was) yet the Preſident had no Power to aſſemble a Council, nor any negative Voice in it, after it was aſſembled; nor had any one Patriarch Juriſdiction over the reſt.

Suppoſing therefore that the Archbiſhop of *Rome*, as Patriarch of the Weſt, had Power to ſummon the Clergy of his *own Patriarchate*, without the Concurrence of the Civil Powers, to meet in Council, (which is far from being certain) yet he had no Authority to ſummon the other Patriarchs and their Clergy to attend.

Some amongſt themſelves were ſo ſenſible of this, that at the Beginning of the *Trent* Council, *Staniſlaus Orechovius*, a zealous *Romaniſt*, wrote to *Hoſius* the Cardinal Legate, and firſt Preſident of the Council, " That it would greatly conduce to their " Reputation and Intereſt, if the Patriarchs " of *Conſtantinople* and *Antioch* were called " to the Council, becauſe the *Greeks* and

" *Armenians*

" *Armenians* depended upon them: And " that he could not underſtand *how the ca-* " *tholick Church could be repreſented, or the* " *Council could be called œcumenical without* " *them.*"——To which the Preſident anſwered, " That the Pope being œcumeni- " cal Patriarch, a Council called by him " was an œcumenical Council [d]."

A few Lines above, I inſinuated ſome Doubtfulneſs if ever there was a Council which could truly and properly be ſtiled *general* or *œcumenical*, as repreſenting the *univerſal Church*; and the Reaſon of my doubting was this, that a general Repreſentation of the whole Church could never happen, without firſt ſummoning provincial Councils in all Parts of Chriſtendom, and a Delegation from them of ſuch Perſons as were to deliver the Senſe of their Conſtituents (as to Matters of Faith) in the general Council; and there is ſome Reaſon to queſtion if this was ever done.

But, not to inſiſt upon this, (which is, I confeſs, ſomewhat foreign to my Argument) there is a very great Difference between the antient Councils and the modern, *as to this Point of repreſenting*. For in the general Councils there was a *Conſent*

[d] Hoſ. oper. p. 373.

ſent of all the Patriarchs, and a general Edict or Summons for the Biſhops from all Parts to meet; but, in this of *Trent*, *four Patriarchs*, and the Biſhops under them, were *overlooked*, and *thereby excluded*, and the *fifth* ſummoned the Biſhops, *&c.* under him, to meet together, and then had the Confidence to call this an holy œcumenical Council, which "(ſays an accurate "Writer) is juſt as if, in the Time of the "Heptarchy in *England*, the King of *Mer*-"*cia* ſhould call together all the States un-"der him, and then ſtile this Convention "of them the Parliament of *England*."

Thus it was in the Council of *Trent*; the Pope cites the Weſtern Biſhops, *&c.* to meet at an improper Place, not all of them either, but ſuch as he might have Confidence in, ſuch as owned his Supremacy, and had taken Oaths to him; and they, when met, though but in ſmall Numbers, at firſt not exceeding forty or fifty, modeſtly call themſelves an œcumenical Council. And this (I ſay) is extremely different from the œcumenical Councils of the primitive Church, and overthrows the Rights of the other Patriarchs, and their Clergy, as they were ſettled by the general Councils. So that the Caſe of being condemned as Hereticks by the general Councils,

cils is (in this Reſpect) very different from that of being condemned by the little provincial Synod at *Trent*.

But there is another good Reaſon why the Pope ought not to have claimed or taken the Privilege of calling this Council to *Trent*, or of preſiding in it by his Legates when aſſembled, *viz.* "that he was a "Party.

If a Cauſe is brought before our Court of Seſſion in *Scotland*, wherein the Preſident, or any other of the Senators, is perſonally, or by the Intereſt of his Family or Relations, directly concerned, he immediately leaves the Bench, and declines to judge in it. And in the Gloſs upon the Canon Law it is ſaid in expreſs Terms, "that the Pope cannot be Judge and Par-"ty in any Caſe whatſoever, but ought to "chooſe Arbitrators [e]."

Now, that this was the Caſe of the Biſhop of *Rome* at the Time of the Council of *Trent*, might be made appear from ſeveral Conſiderations. It had been the common Demand of Princes, and the Deſire of Chriſtendom for more than two hundred Years before, to have a *Reformation in*

[e] Can. 23. quæſt. 3. inter querelas. c. ne quis in propria cauſa, in rubro, & in nigro. Gloſſ. in can. conſuetud. 16. quæſt. 6.

capite, & in membris; and accordingly the Council of *Conſtance*, after the Depoſition of Pope *John* XXIII. made this very wiſe good Decree (Seſſ. 40.) " That the new Pope " to be next choſen, together with the Coun- " cil, before he departed from thence, *ſhould* " *reform the Head of the Church, and the* " *Court of* Rome, *in ſuch Articles as had* " *been exhibited by the People and Nations.*"

It is alſo to be remembred, that though this Council was called upon a Pretence of " reſtoring the Peace of the Church, and " the Extirpation of Hereſies;" yet theſe Hereſies were condemned, before the Council was called, by the Bull of Pope *Leo* X. (8th of *June* 1520.) and by that of Pope *Paul* III. (23d of *Auguſt* 1535.) So that the Caſe of *Luther* and others was already determined, and their Fate too, had they been fooliſh enough to appear, as *John Hus*, and *Jerom* of *Prague* had done at *Conſtance*, about 150 Years before.

No Wonder then, that the Proteſtants (by their Declaration at *Smalcald anno* 1537) did refuſe to be concluded by this Council [1], " becauſe (ſay they) the Pope is not only " a Party, but has already condemned our " Doctrine long before, and is thereby grown " more

[1] Sleidan. l. 11.

" more liable to Suſpicion; for who can
" doubt, what Judgment will be paſſed up-
" on our Doctrine, in his Council, *&c.*"

But there is another Conſideration, which ſtill further diſqualifies the Pope for calling or preſiding in this Council, *viz.* that *Appeals were entered from him*, and any Council under his Influence or Direction. I will not inſiſt on thoſe of *Luther* and other Proteſtants, becauſe they may be objected to, as Parties, Criminals and Hereticks; but I beg leave to mention two not liable to the ſame Exception.

The firſt is that of the Archbiſhop of *Cologne*, who, ſays *John Sleidan*, (who was at the Council of *Trent* [g],) " refuſed the Pope
" for his Judge, becauſe of a long Time
" he had been accuſed of Hereſy and Ido-
" latry; wherefore he *appealed from his*
" *Sentence to a lawful Council of* Germany,
" wherein he proteſted, that as ſoon as it
" ſhould be opened, he would implead the
" Pope, and proſecute him accordingly."

The other is that of the Univerſity of *Paris*, in their Act of *May* 27th, 1517.--- Theſe ſtrong Words are inſerted, in defence of their pragmatick Sanction, then attacked by Pope *Leo* X. " We the Rector and the

[g] Johan. Sleidan. comment. l. 18.

" Univerſity, finding ourſelves grieved, " wronged and oppreſſed,——as well for " ourſelves, as for all others ſubject to our " Univerſity, and all ſuch as will take Part " with it, *do appeal from our holy Father* " *the Pope ill adviſed, to a future Council* " *lawfully aſſembled, in a ſafe Place, to* " *which we may freely and boldly go* [h]."

Notwithſtanding all this, the Pope was ſet over the Council of *Trent* by the Members aſſembled there; though it is a Thing unheard of before, that he from whom an Appeal is made, ſhould be Judge in the very Caſe of Appeal. For the Doctors of the Canon, as well as of the Civil Law, tell us,——" That the Judge from whom " an Appeal is made, may be refuſed in all " other Cauſes that concern the Appellant, " till the Appeal be void [i]." And this ſhall ſuffice for the firſt Argument, by which I meant to ſhew the Difference between ancient and modern Councils, and that this at *Trent* was neither general nor competent.

2*dly*, Another Diſparity between ancient and modern Councils, is the *Manner of proceeding in them, when aſſembled.* I mention this the rather, becauſe the Author of the

[h] Faſcicul. rerum expetendarum, p. 36.
[i] Vid. Ran. Review, l. 1. c. 3. p. 21.

the Manuſcript has told us in a very grave ſolemn Way [k], "That if Things be throughly and impartially conſidered in this Matter, the Proteſtants have no other Plea againſt the Church, than what the ancient Sectaries had; *nor is it poſſible for Proteſtants to ſhew a material Difference betwixt their Way of arguing againſt Authority, and that of ancient Sectaries.* And indeed (continues he) if the Method of Proteſtants were good, it would ſkreen all the ancient Hereticks from the Sentences and Anathemas of the Church pronounced againſt them. This Method of Proteſtants (ſays he) is to ſet up their Reaſon, or private Judgement, above the Authority of the whole Church of God, contrary to what the Scriptures and Fathers clearly teach, as has been ſhewed above, *&c.*"——Whether this has been ſhewed above or not, I ſubmit to the private Judgment of the Reader; but I hope it may be of ſome Service to him, to point out the Difference *in way of proceeding* between ancient Councils, and ſome modern Ones.

The Strength of our Author's Argument lies in this, That the ancient Hereticks were

[k] MS. parag. 16.

were deemed obſtinate, for not ſubmitting to the Deciſions of general Councils; *therefore* Proteſtants are obſtinate Hereticks too, for not ſubmitting to the Deciſions of the Council of *Trent*.

To clear up this Matter, let it be conſidered, that the *ancient Hereticks were condemned by that Rule of Faith, which the Church then received, and which we Proteſtants acknowledge*, viz. *the holy Scriptures*. But the *Council of Trent* (in its 4th Seſſion) ſet up a *new Rule of Faith*, on Purpoſe to find ſome Pretence to condemn us for Hereticks, *viz. Tradition, which they declared to be of equal Authority with the Scriptures*, directly contrary to the Doctrine of the primitive Church, as, I hope, is already ſhewed. And this (I humbly conceive) is *one material Difference* between the Caſe of Proteſtants, and that of ancient Hereticks, tho' our learned Author thought it not poſſible to find any.

The Method of ancient general Councils, was to have the Books of Scripture placed in the middle of them upon a Table, as the Rule they were to judge by. Even *Bellarmine* acknowledges, that the Council of *Nice* drew its Concluſions out of Scripture[1]; and *Richerius* a Doctor of the *Sorbon*,

[1] Bellar. de concil. l. 2. c. 12.

bon, not only affirms this to have been their Cuſtom, but tells us the Reaſon of it, *viz.* "That the Fathers in the Councils might be "admoniſhed, *that all Things were to be ex-* "*amined by the Standart of the Goſpel* [m]."

To this let me add, that theſe ancient Councils met upon very important Points, the Divinity and Incarnation of our bleſſed Saviour, and ſuch eſſential Articles of Faith; and for declaring and eſtabliſhing theſe, they needed no other Guide or Vouchers but the inſpired Writings. But the Caſe of Councils in after Ages came to be very different; for when they took upon them to define other Matters, for which they had no Foundation, no Colour in Scripture, they begun to go by other Rules, and then the Chriſtian Church did not ſhew the ſame Reſpect to them.

Let me give but one Inſtance of this. The ſecond Council of *Nice*, (*anno* 787) *enacted the Worſhip of Images*, and (for ought appears) was the *firſt that went upon Tradition*, which was like ſetting up *Dagon* beſide the Ark of God, which contained the Teſtimony: This Council, I ſay, was univerſally rejected in the Weſtern Parts, (Rome *excepted*) as appears from the Council of *Franc-*

[m] Hiſt. concil. tom. 1. p. 498.

Francfort, from the Oppoſition made to it by *Charles* the Great, King of *France*, and afterwards Emperor of *Germany*, and from the unexceptionable Teſtimonies of *Alcuin*, *Hincmarus*, and others. And in the Eaſt, *Leo* (ſirnamed the *Armenian*) Emperor there, (who was excommunicated by Pope *Paſchal* I. and about two Years thereafter, that is, in 820, was murdered on *Chriſtmas* Eve) made a vigorous Oppoſition to the Doctrine and Decrees of this ſecond Council of *Nice*.

This ſhews evidently, that neither *Leo* in the Eaſt, nor *Charles* the Great in the Weſt, nor theſe learned Men who wrote on their Side of the Queſtion, nor thoſe great Churches of *France* and *Germany*, *&c.* did think themſelves ſo tied up by the Definitions of Councils proceeding in ſuch a Manner, but that they were at full Liberty to examine, and, if they found Cauſe, to reject ſuch Definitions; and accordingly they all did, without any Scruple, reject that ſecond Council of *Nice*, *as being contrary to Scripture*, at the ſame Time that they paid due Regard to the firſt Council of *Nice*, as we Proteſtants do.

Now, I beg the Favour of our learned Author to ſhew a *material Difference* between the Caſe of Proteſtants, and that of theſe

theſe two great Emperors, and of the Biſhops which joined them in oppoſing that Authority, which would have impoſed Image Woſhip upon them. They rejected the Decrees of a Council which (they thought in their private Judgment) had departed from the true Rule, that of Scripture, and this notwithſtanding the Biſhop of *Rome* had declared for that Council, or (if you will) confirmed its Decrees.——We Proteſtants have done no more; yet they are allowed to have been good Catholicks, while we are pronounced Hereticks and Sectaries. This (I humbly think) ſeems not quite fair.

The plain Truth of this Matter is, that while Councils did declare, that they intended to make uſe of no other Rule, but Scripture, and to deliver only the Senſe of the catholick Church, from the Beginning, a great Regard was due, and was ſhewed to them, and their Definitions; but when they ſet up another Rule, the Chriſtan Church had juſt Reaſon not to ſubmit to their Decrees, and therefore did it not.

And it is in vain for our Author to bring his Wit, in place of Argument, or to fancy that we are to be proſelyted by only a ſmart Phraſe; for him to ſay no more, but only with a Sneer to tell us, *That this is the Plea of all Hereticks*, is juſt as if an in-

nocent Perſon might not be allowed to plead *not guilty*, becauſe the greateſt Malefactors have done the ſame.

There muſt be ſome certain Rules, whereby to judge in this Matter, and this (I think) is one good Rule to fix upon, *viz. that modern Councils proceed as the ancient ones did, according to Scripture.* Had the Fathers of *Trent* proceeded upon the Plan of the general Councils; had they taken the holy Scriptures for their Rule, and reformed what was amiſs in their Doctrine, Worſhip, Polity, Diſcipline and Practice by that Standard, I dare ſay, we ſhould have ſeen more of *real Religion*, and leſs Diviſion in the Chriſtian World, than (woes me) is to be ſeen at this Day.

3*dly*, Another Diſparity between the general Councils, and that of *Trent*, *is in the Numbers of which they were compoſed.* I have already obſerved, that theſe ancient Councils came much nearer to a *Repreſentation of the whole Church* of Chriſt, than this modern one can pretend to do; becauſe to them, the Biſhops were duly called, and did come from all Parts of Chriſtendom, and all the Patriarchs concurred: Whereas in this of *Trent* there was but one Patriarch concerned, and the Members of which it was made up, were picked out of ſuch as were

were likely to be moſt obſequious to the Dictates of *that One*; ſo that it may truly be ſaid, that though the Pope was not perſonally in the Council, yet the Council was in the Pope.

But not to inſiſt here on the Characters, Connexions and Dependencies of the *Trent* Fathers, even *in point of Numbers*, they were too few to repreſent but the Weſtern Church; and conſequently they could never be ſaid to repreſent the whole catholick Church, nor be ſtiled an œcumenical Council.

In their firſt Seſſion, there were but four Archbiſhops, twenty three Biſhops, the Ambaſſador of the King of the *Romans*, the Captain of the City of *Trent*, five Generals of Orders, and a few Doctors: In the next there were five Biſhops, and three Abbots more; and ſo they grew in Number by Degrees, but not very faſt; for in their eighth Seſſion, 11th *March* 1547, (which was two full Years, two Months, and twenty two Days from its Commencement) there were but forty three Biſhops, and eight Archbiſhops. And Father *Paulo* ſays, " that in " the Year 1551, (which was ſix Years af- " ter opening the Council) for eight Months " together that the Council laſted, the Pre-

 " ſidents

" ſidents and Princes being reckoned, the " Number did not exceed ſixty four [n]."

'Tis true indeed, that in the 25th (which was its laſt) Seſſion, the 3d and 4th of *December* 1563, (about eighteen Years, all but nine Days ſince its firſt Meeting) their Number was much greater, and a great deal of Management was wanted, and was uſed to bring it to that; though this will never compenſate the Defect of Numbers in the earlier Seſſions, wherein moſt of their Decrees were formed.

But what is all this in compariſon of the general Councils? In the firſt of *Nice* there were three hundred and eighteen Biſhops, in that of *Epheſus* two hundred, and in that of *Chalcedon* ſix hundred. The firſt at *Conſtantinople* was indeed the thinneſt, there being but one hundred and fifty Biſhops in it; the Reaſon whereof was, that there was another Council aſſembled in *Rome* at the ſame Time.

But beſides the Paucity of their Numbers, there is another Thing which diſqualifies them for *repreſenting*, *viz.* That even the few there, were not brought from all Parts of the Church, not even of the Weſtern Church. From the very Acts of the Coun-

cil

[n] Paul. hiſt. l. 4. p. 317.

cil it appears, that the greateſt Part of the Members were either *Italians* or *Spaniards*; ſo that however it might be called a *Congregation*, a *Convention*, or a *national Council*, it had not the ſmalleſt Pretenſion to be called *general*, or (what they arrogantly called it themſelves) *oecumenical*. Thus it ſeems to have been conſidered by the King of *France*, *Henry* II. For his Letter to the Council was directed, *Sanctiſſimis in Chriſto Patribus conventûs Tridentini*, which was taken much amiſs by the Fathers; the Biſhop of *Orange*, and the *Spaniſh* Prelates ſaying, that Letter could not be to them, for they were a general Council, and not a Convention [p].

In all the ten Seſſions, under Pope *Paul* III. (whether at *Trent*, or *Bologna*, to which Place it was tranſlated) there were but two of the *French* Nation that aſſiſted, and in ſome of them none at all. After its Reduction to *Trent*, and the Death of *Paul* III. the Council broke up, from the 14th of *September* 1547, to the 1ſt of *May* 1551, when it was ſet on foot again, not as a new Council, (though that was deſired) but as a Continuation of the old, by the Bull of Pope *Julius* III. under whom were holden ſix Seſſions, and not one *French* Divine aſſiſting

[p] Paul. hiſt. p. 318.

ſiſting in any one of them: Indeed they could not be there, becauſe the King of *France* had proteſted againſt the Council, and prohibited the Eccleſiaſticks of his Kingdom to go thither.

In that Proteſtation which bears Date in *Auguſt* 1551, he ſays, "That being engaged in Wars, he was not bound to ſend "the Biſhops of his Kingdom to the Council of *Trent*, foraſmuch as they could "not have *free and ſafe Acceſs* thither; and "becauſe the Council itſelf, from which "he was excluded againſt his Will, is *ſuch* "*as was never reputed a general one*, but "rather accounted a *Privy Council*, invented not out of any Deſire of *reforming* "Diſcipline, and reſtoring it, but for countenancing and favouring of ſome Body; "and in ſhort, it was ſuch (he ſays) that "there was greater Reſpect had in it to private Intereſts, than to publick Utility [p]."

And as to the later Seſſions of it under Pope *Pius* IV. the King of *France*, *Charles* IX. by his Letters to his Ambaſſadors, *Ferriers* and *Pibrac*, commanded them to retire from the Council, and to cauſe the Biſhops of *France* to retire alſo; and accordingly they did retire to *Venice*, as appears from

[p] Vid. libellum de ſtatu eccleſ. Gallican. in ſchiſmate,

from their Letter to the King, bearing Date at *Venice*, 25th *November* 1563. So that we need not wonder that all the Decrees of this Council have never as yet been received in *France*.

If I was not afraid of running this Paper to undue Length, it would not be amiss to transcribe some of the Speeches which this *Arnold Ferriers* (first President of the Parliament of *Paris*) made in the Council of *Trent*, in *September* 1563. In one of them he complains, "That the Council did not "set about the *Reformation of the Church*, "as they ought to do. That it was not the "Reformation of the Dead, or of those who "were to come after this, that was demand-"ed: Of whom then? I will not tell you, "(says he) but it is easy to collect it by E-"numeration. If any will reply, that there "have been certain Decrees made concern-"ing *Reformation*, and that by them Satis-"faction is given to such Things as were "demanded.——We answer, that they might "indeed afford Satisfaction, *if one Thing* "*might be paid for another without Consent of* "*the Creditor*. That there has been a "Bustle made about *reforming* those *Things* "that needed not.——But that Kings and "Princes were hereby deprived of their "Rights.——That Censures and Excom-

"munications

" munications have been denounced againſt " them.---That the *Liberties of the* Gallican " *Church* have been invaded, *&c.* and there- " fore according to the Commands which " they had received from their Prince, they " were conſtrained to oppoſe theſe Meaſures " in the Way they did."

And in another Oration of his, towards the End of the ſame Month, he tells them plainly " that the *French* Nation would not " acknowledge *Pius* IV. for Pope, and that " according to the Command which they " had received, they charged the Biſhops, " and other Eccleſiaſticks of *France*, to re- " tire themſelves, and depart from the Coun- " cil: Which they did accordingly [q]."

4thly, It is certain, that in the Inſtances above mentioned, there is no Reſemblance between the four general Councils, and the Convention at *Trent*, and I am unwilling to carry on the Compariſon further; becauſe it would be an Indignity, and great Injury to the Memory of thoſe holy Men, which aſſiſted in the ancient Councils, to think there were any ſuch baſe Artifices, and groſs Enormities amongſt them, as may (with Truth) be charged upon the Popes and Fathers of *Trent*.

This

[q] Ran. rev. l. 1. c. 11. p. 53. & Paul. hiſt. l. 7. p. 667.

This laſt Article I chooſe to touch very ſoftly: For, however the bringing to Light Works of Darkneſs, and Diſhoneſty, or continuing the Remembrance of them, may be the Buſineſs of an Hiſtorian; yet I am of Opinion, that (unneceſſarily) expoſing to View the groſſer Faults of Churchmen, of what Order or Communion ſoever they be, can do no real Service to Religion, which is my great Aim.---But if any one will read over the many Accounts of that Council, or but the three already referred to, as given by thoſe of their own Communion, he will find a Detection of Frauds, Artifices, Corruptions, and vile Things, which I forbear to bring forth: I will only take the Liberty to mention two Particulars, which ought to be conſidered as *Nullities in that Council*, and yet in neither of them was Satisfaction obtained.

1*ſt*, That the Privilege of *propoſing* any Thing to the Cognizance of the Council, was confined to the Pope's Legates who preſided in it, directly contrary to ancient Cuſtom, and to common Juſtice. This Reſolution of theirs, that nothing ſhould be moved in Council, but *proponentibus legatis*, was vigorouſly oppoſed at firſt, and when enacted as a Rule, was greatly complained of. —One of the *French* Ambaſſadors (*Pibrac*)

in a Letter to the Queen Mother, ſays, " That My Lords the *Legates*, together " with the *Italian Biſhops which came from* " Rome, made a kind of Decree, that *no-* " *thing ſhould be propoſed* for the Fathers to " conſult of, but by the *Legates only*, or " at leaſt nothing but what pleaſed them; " This we have ſeen obſerved, even to the " ſhutting up of the Council [r]."

And if in any Debate the Majority ſeemed to be of an Opinion contrary to that of the Pope, and his Conclave, further Proceedings in that Queſtion were ſtopt, till the Legates got Auxiliaries or Inſtructions from *Rome*, how to bring a Majority on their Side; nor were their Decrees ratified, till firſt reviewed at *Rome*, and returned with Approbation to *Trent*, which gave Occaſion for a ſmart Saying, common at that Time, but ſuch as I forbear to repeat, as it borders upon Blaſphemy.

Various Methods were taken to obtain and preſerve a Majority in the Council, in the Pope's Intereſt: The Biſhop of *Ventimiglia* had ſecret Orders from his Holineſs, to threaten ſome of the Members, and to make large Promiſes to others; and from the Beginning to the End of the Council, there

[r] Paul. hiſt. p. 840.

there were (beſides all other Promotions) about ſixty Cardinals created to ſtrengthen the papal Intereſt, notwithſtanding ſome of the Popes (particularly *Paul* IV.) had bound themſelves by an Oath (taken when elected) not to do ſo.——And we are told, that when the Article of the *Reſidency of Biſhops* was likely to be carried in the Council, the Pope ordered the Legates to put off that Queſtion for ſix Months, in which Time he muſtered up, or created in *Apulia* and *Sicily*, *forty Biſhops*, which were hurried away to *Trent*, to caſt the Balance to his Side[s].

Indeed if we conſider the *Oath* enjoined to be taken by all theſe who are to be promoted to Biſhopricks, or other Cures of Souls in that Communion [t], *viz.* "That "they acknowledge the holy catholick, a- "poſtolick Church, under *one Biſhop of* "Rome, *Vicar of Chriſt*, and ſhall conſtant- "ly hold the Faith, and Doctrine thereof, "*in regard that being directed by the Holy* "*Ghoſt, ſhe cannot err*; and that they ſhall "have in *Veneration the Authority of Coun-* "*cils, as certain and undoubted*, and ſhall "not doubt of the Things once determi- "ned by them, *&c.*"——When this (I ſay)

[s] Paul. hiſt. p. 74. 272. 361. 396. 404. 515. 660. and 825.

[t] Id. p. 733.

is conſidered, it cannot be imagined, either that the *Trent* Council was, or that any future Council of that Kind, ever can be free, unleſs Churchmen, who are Members of it, were releaſed from ſuch Obligation, and ſet looſe from ſuch ſcandalous Fetters.

This being the diſmal, ſlaviſh Condition of the *Trent* Fathers, we ſhall wonder the leſs at the other *Nullity of that Synod*, which I promiſed to mention, *viz.* An obſtinate, though very artful *Denial of Juſtice*, by which Means, the chief End for which a Council was deſired, was not obtained.

In moſt Places of *Europe*, or rather I may ſay in all Parts of it, except *Rome*, it had of a long Time been wiſhed, that a Council might be aſſembled, ſuch as might reform the Abuſes which had crept into the Church: For this Purpoſe two Things were chiefly inſiſted upon, *viz.* 1*ſt*, That it might be aſſembled in a proper Place, where the Debates might be unawed and free, and the Members have ſafe Acceſs and Regreſs; and 2*dly*, That they ſhould begin with a *Reformation of the Head and Members*, *i. e.* of the Pope and Court of *Rome*.

For the 1*ſt*, ——*Henry* VIII. of *England*, who had written againſt *Luther*, and whom the Pope *Leo* X. had complimented with the Title of *Defender of the Faith*, the

the Princes of *Germany* met at *Smalcald*, in the Year 1537, the Kings of *France* and Emperors of *Germany*, at ſeveral Times had all inſiſted, that the Council ſhould not be held in *Italy*, nor in any Place where the Pope had the chief Command.

They remembred that the Fathers in the 2d Council of *Piſa*, had abſolutely refuſed to obey the Command of Pope *Julius* II. for aſſembling them at *Rome*, or any City ſo much under his Juriſdiction, where he had Forts, Guards, Garriſons, *&c.* and that there wanted not Aſſaſſins which might be employed by the Way, telling his Holineſs in plain Terms, " That they looked upon " the *Lateran* and ſuch Places, as very *dan-* " *gerous for them to meet in*, and that they " could *not rely upon his Promiſes of ſafe* " *Conduct.*"

Theſe Princes and States had not forgot the hard Fate of *John Hus*, and *Jerom* of *Prague*, and that the Decree of the Council of *Conſtance* was ſtill in Force, *viz.* " that " bad Promiſes muſt be broken, and a " Courſe taken with Hereticks, notwith- " ſtanding the ſafe Conduct granted by the " Emperor and other Kings, and that ſome " Means might alſo be found to wave that " which had been promiſed by the Coun- " cil, *&c.*" Upon theſe and other Accounts, they

they all proteſted that the Council ſhould not be aſſembled in any Place of *Italy*.

2*dly*, As for the other Particular, *the Reformation of the Pope and Court of* Rome, I have already given ſome Hints, how much that was wanted, and how often and earneſtly it was deſired; but that ſeems never to have been intended by the Court of *Rome*. *Du Pin* ſays [u], "That when the Council, in its ſe-"cond Seſſion, had reſolved to handle the "Points of Doctrine and Reformation both "at the ſame Time, the Pope wrote to the "Legates, that *he was not pleaſed with their "conſenting to treat of the Reformation, and "ordered them to defer the Publication of "that Decree.*"

But if the Reader inclines to be further ſatisfied, let him read the Inſtructions given to the Imperial and *French* Ambaſſadors, by *Ferdinand* I. and *Charles* IX. and the Attempts which (in Virtue of theſe Inſtructions) were made in the Council for regulating the Number of Cardinals, and of religious Orders, Houſes and Holidays, and for reforming Abuſes in the Matter of Diſpenſations, Indulgences, Exemptions, Reſervations, Interdictions, Excommunications, *&c.* and for reſtoring the Cup in the Euchariſt,

[u] Compend. hiſt. vol. 4. p. 75.

chariſt, Marriage of Prieſts, Worſhip in a known Tongue, with many other Demands of Reformation, he will ſee (with Regret) how little was granted, of a great deal that was deſired and wanted.

And as for the firſt and principal Thing wanted, the *Reformation of the Head*, the *Trent* Fathers were ſo far from attempting it, that they did the direct contrary: Their Reſpect for his Holineſs was ſuch, that inſtead of touching the Hem of his Garment by any Retrenchment, they ſet him higher than other Councils had done; nay they (in effect) ſet him *above Councils*, by referring to him not only the Ratification of their Decrees, but the Explanation and ſupplying the Defects of them [x]. And accordingly, when Pope *Pius* IV. confirmed theſe Decrees, he thanked the Prelates for the Reſpect and Tenderneſs they had for him, ſaying, "That if he had been to make Rules "for reforming himſelf, he would have been "more ſevere than they had been [y]." And yet, if we may believe their own Hiſtorians, he needed Reformation as much as any other Churchman could do: For they give us to underſtand, that he was ſuſpected of Simony,

[x] Seſſ. ult. i. e. 25. & Paul. hiſt. p. 817.
[y] Ran. rev. p. 65.

mony, in his Advancement to St. *Peter*'s Chair, and that he had put to death in Priſon the Cardinal *Caraffa*, and his Brother the Prince *de Palliano* (Nephews of Pope *Paul* IV.) to prevent the Detection of that Simony [z].

It was this *holy Father*, who brought to a Concluſion this *famous Council*, which had been thrice conveened, and had had twenty five Seſſions in the Space of eighteen Years, (a large Time for Management) being continued from 1545 to 1563, under the Pontificate of five Popes, *viz.* *Paul* III. *Julius* III. *Marcellus* II. *Paul* IV. and *Pius* IV.

I have avoided to inſiſt upon the Squabbles about *Precedency* which happened at *Trent*, not only among ſecular Perſons (Princes and Ambaſſadors) but even among the Prelates (a Thing very indecent, repugnant to the Spirit of the Goſpel, and the Humility of true Churchmen) with many other Incidents there, all tending to diſcredit the Acts, and leſſen the Authority of that Council; of which I ſhall give no Character, but only tranſcribe a very ſhort one, given by a learned Writer, and Lawyer of the *Roman* Communion, *viz.* "*The Iniquity and Injuſtice of this* "*Council*,

z Vid. Morer. dict. & Paul. hiſt. p. 628.

" *Council*, is ſuch that even good Catholicks " themſelves do abhor it [a]."

But that the Reader may judge of the Opinion which Men had of the *Roman* Pontiffs about that Time, I beg leave to lay before him a Parallel, or rather an *Antitheſis between our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, the true Head of his univerſal Church, and his *pretended Vicar General* upon Earth, which I have tranſcribed from the ſame learned Gentleman.

1. Chriſt rejected the Kingdom of this World.——His Vicar graſps at it.

2. Chriſt refuſed a Kingdom when offered to him.——His Vicar will needs have one, which is denied him.

3. Chriſt refuſed to be made a ſecular Judge.——His Vicar takes upon him to judge the Emperor.

4. Chriſt ſubmitted himſelf to the Emperor's Deputy.——His Vicar prefers himſelf to the Emperor himſelf, and to all the World.

5. Chriſt reproved thoſe who deſired Primacy.——His Vicar contends for it, againſt the whole Church.

6. Chriſt upon *Palm-Sunday* was mounted on an Aſs.——His Vicar is not content

[a] Ran. review, p. 388.

with a ſtately Cavalry, unleſs the Emperor hold his right Stirrup.

7. Chriſt united the diſagreeing *Jews*, and all other Nations into one ſpiritual Kingdom.——His Vicar has often raiſed Wars, and Seditions amongſt the *Germans*, and other Nations, when they were at Unity.

8. Chriſt though innocent, endured Injuries patiently.——His Vicar though nocent, ceaſeth not to do Injuries to the Church, and to the Rights of Kings [b].

This ſhort Account I have given of the Council of *Trent*, (however imperfect, yet) being certainly true and properly vouched, I will leave the Reader to judge which is moſt in the wrong, our Author or I? whether I am more to be blamed, for ſaying it was neither *general nor free?* or he for pronouncing all them *Hereticks*, that do not implicitly ſubmit to its Deciſions?

Indeed our Author's *Argument from Councils*, is brought forth with ſuch an Air of Authority and Peremptorineſs, as if there was no Room left for the Faithful to reject, or even to examine their Decrees; and Pope *Pius* IV. inſinuates no leſs in his Confirmation of thoſe of *Trent*. But I am ſurpri-

ſed

[b] Id. l. 2. c. 13. p. 131. & Greg. Heymburgen. in confutat. primat. Papæ, part. 2. versùs finem.

ſed that theſe Gentlemen do not conſider, that in ſome Caſes it is neceſſary to *reject* (and therefore in all Caſes it muſt be lawful to *examine*) their Deciſions, I mean, where their Decrees have been evidently wrong, or when they are directly contrary to thoſe of other Councils.

The Prophet *David* foretold, "That the "Rulers would take *Counſel* together againſt "the Lord, and againſt his Anointed."—— And ſo they did, in that Council of the *Jews* which delivered the Son of God, Chriſt Jeſus, into the Hands of the Heathen, who condemned him to the Croſs.

The ſecond Council of *Epheſus* openly took the Part of *Eutychius*, who affirmed that the human Nature in Chriſt was turned into his Divinity, ſo that after the Union, there remained but *one Nature* in him. The ſecond Council of *Nice* decreed flat Idolatry, about the Adoration of Images: Not to mention again the Councils of *Ariminum*, *Smyrna*, *Seleucia* and *Sirmium*, all of them *Arian*, and decreeing (more or leſs) againſt the Divinity of our bleſſed Saviour. Were theſe Councils to be ſubmitted to, and their Definitions implicitly received, in Oppoſition to the catholick Doctrine?

Thus again the Councils of *Eliberis*, (or *Elvira*) Canon 361, and of *Conſtantinople*,

anno 754, compoſed of 338 Biſhops, called by *Conſtantine Compronimus* Emperor of the Eaſt, decreed that Images were not to be ſuffered in Chriſtian Churches; but the ſecond Council of *Nice anno* 787, decreed the contrary, and ſomething more, *viz.* that they ought to be worſhipped. The Council of *Baſil* under Pope *Julius* II. determined that a Council of Biſhops was above the Pope; but the *Lateran* Council under *Leo* X. decreed that the Pope was above the Council. I hope they will not find Confidence enough to affirm, that the ſovereign Authority of Councils can determine both Sides of a Contradiction to be true, and that we are bound implicitly to ſubmit to their Decrees, when they do ſo.

But one would think, that leſs Noiſe ought to have been made about rejecting the Decrees of *Trent*, at leaſt until they are agreed among themſelves, what Councils are to be received, and what to be rejected. Themſelves allow, that ſome Councils may be, and ought to be rejected, and therefore all our Buſineſs at preſent is to enquire, whether we may not (with as much Reaſon) reject ſome Councils, as they do others?

They reject the Council of *Rimini*, (or *Ariminum*) which together with that of *Seleucia*, (which ſat at the ſame Time) make up

up the moſt general Council we read of in Church Hiſtory. For *Bellarmine* [c] owns, that there were 600 Biſhops in the Weſtern Part of it. And yet the Authority of this Council is rejected by them, (and juſtly too) becauſe it was too much influenced by *Conſtantius* and his Agents, to eſtabliſh *Arianiſm*; though it is to be remembred that the Doctrine of this Council probably was ſigned by the Pope *Liberius*, and ſomething like it by him at *Sirmium*.

The ſecond Council of *Epheſus* wanted no proper Summons, no Preſence of Patriarchs, or Number of Biſhops; yet this is rejected, on Account of its *Eutychianiſm*, and becauſe its *Proceedings were too violent*. And the Councils of *Conſtantinople* againſt Images, are rejected by them too, becauſe *but one Patriarch* was preſent in either of them. Now I deſire to know, whether it be not as lawful to object againſt other Councils, as againſt theſe, ſuppoſing the Reaſons to be the ſame, or as good, and equally well vouched.

Beſides, we find they are divided in the Church of *Rome*, even concerning their *later Councils*. Some ſay the Councils of *Piſa*, *Conſtance* and *Baſil*, were *true general Councils*,

[c] Bel. de concil. l. 1. c. 6.

Councils, and that that of *Lateran*, under Pope *Leo* X. was not ſo: Others ſay that the former three have not the Authority of general Councils, but the other one has; ſome ſay there have been *eighteen general Councils*, others of them will allow of no more than *eight* of the Number, *viz.* thoſe wherein the Eaſtern and Weſtern Biſhops met, and ſo the Councils of *Lateran* and *Trent*, beſides others, are cut off. What becomes then of *Pius* IV.'s Creed? What becomes of the Articles of Faith defined by thoſe Councils? For they cannot be received on Account of their Authority, and probably it will be difficult to find any other Foundation, on which to eſtabliſh them.

So that in the Iſſue, the Gentleman's Argument will conclude as ſtrong againſt *Papiſts*, as againſt *Proteſtants*. For do not *both theſe differing Parties in the Church of* Rome, ſide with the *ancient Hereticks*, as much as we Proteſtants do, in ſo far as they *in their Turns* object againſt the *ſupreme Judicature in the Church*, and decline the Judgment of thoſe Councils which they reject, as much as the *ancient Hereticks* did the Councils of their own Times. Had our learned Author conſidered all this with more Attention, and due Temper, before he ſat down to write, it is probable he would not

have

have been ſo ill adviſed, *in comparing us Proteſtants to the ancient Sectaries and Hereticks*, merely for our rejecting the Authority, and deſpiſing the Judgment of *Trent*.

§ III. There is but little more in this or the following Paragraphs of the Manuſcript, that challenges Notice, or deſerves an Anſwer.

As for the *Company* he is pleaſed to claſs us with, and the hard Names he ſo often gives us, either directly or obliquely, *viz. Hereticks*, *Sectaries* and ſuch Terms of Reproach: We Proteſtants are not aſhamed to own, with one much greater and better than we are,——" That after the Way " which they call *Hereſy*, ſo worſhip we " the God of our Fathers; believing all " Things which are written in the Law, " and the Prophets; and have Hope towards " God,---*&c.* [d]."

If I were inclined to it, there would be no Difficulty in finding hard Names, and very ill Characters, fully as applicable to the *Roman* Church and her chief Pontiffs; but ſoft Words and hard Arguments will do better. St. *Peter* forbids us to " return " railing for railing;" and we have learned from

[d] Acts, xxiv. 14.

from St. *Michael*, " not to bring a railing " Accuſation againſt our Adverſaries, but " to pray that God would abate their Pride, " aſſwage their Malice, and defeat their " Devices."——And there is Reaſon to hope, that our Imitation of the Archangel's Example may be fully as acceptable to him, as their Worſhip [e].

As for the Stroke he repeats at private Judgment, the Edge of it is already taken off in ſeveral preceeding Parts of this Treatiſe, which need not be repeated.---But he has injured us ſo groſly, in ſaying " that *we argue a-* " *gainſt Authority*, juſt as the ancient Se- " ctaries did," that he would deſerve ſome ſevere Reproof, if I was not reſolved not to be put out of Temper. If he meant that we argue againſt *catholick Authority*, (and he could mean nothing elſe, to give Weight to his Argument) it is not true in Fact; for we ſubmit to catholick Authority, and are content to be determined by it: But he ought to have remembred, that there is a wide Difference between the Authority of the univerſal Church of Chriſt, in all Ages and Places, and the Infallibility of a particular Church now, which was the Subject of Queſtion, and not have attempted thus dexterouſly to ſhift the Scene.

" The

[e] 1 Pet. iii. 9. & epiſt. Jud. ver. 9. Revel. xix. 10. & xxii. 9.

" The *ancient Hereticks* (ſays he [f]) no
" leſs appealed to Scripture, moſt of them,
" than *Proteſtants* do now, and were as
" willing to have their Cauſe tried by Scrip-
" ture, provided ſtill that themſelves might
" be Judges and Interpreters of the Scrip-
" ture; but this Proviſo, the ancient Church
" would never hear of, but *anathematized*
" *them by the Scripture* as ſhe underſtood
" it, declaring thereby that ſhe looked upon
" herſelf as the authentick Interpreter of
" the Scripture, to whoſe Judgment and
" Interpretation all were obliged to ſubmit.
" If Things be throughly and impartially
" conſidered in this Matter, the Proteſtants
" have no other Plea againſt the Church,
" than what the ancient Hereticks had,
" nor is it poſſible for Proteſtants to ſhew
" a material Difference betwixt their Way
" of arguing againſt Authority, and that of
" *ancient Sectaries*: And indeed if the Me-
" thod of Proteſtants were good, it would
" ſkreen all the ancient Hereticks from the
" Sentences and Anathemas of the Church
" pronounced againſt them. This Method
" of *Proteſtants*, is to ſet up their *Reaſon* or
" *private Judgment*, *above the Authority of*
" *the whole Church of God*, contrary to what

[f] MS. Parag. 16, 17.

" the Scriptures and Fathers clearly teach, " *&c.*"

The Lord forgive this Author ſo many groſs *Miſrepreſentations* and *falſe Colourings*, as are here crowded together. I muſt do the Juſtice to ſome of his Communion I have been acquainted with, and whom I highly eſteemed and loved, on Account of their great Piety and Moderation, Worth and Probity, that I am fully convinced, they would not have ſpoken the Language of this Gentleman, nor have had Recourſe to ſo many Falſhoods and Fallacies, no not to have brought all the World into the *Roman Communion*.

Though the Frauds and Faultineſs of our Author's Reaſonings are already detected, in the two preceeding Sections, yet I will beg leave to reſolve this Diſcourſe (to which the Gentleman has given ſo plauſible a Turn) into its proper Heads, and put his Arguments into Form, in all the ſeveral Shapes into which they can be put, that the Reader may the ſooner diſcover the Nature and Tendency of them, and how true, how ſtrong and concluding they are, or the direct contrary.

The *ancient Hereticks* appealed to Scripture as interpreted by themſelves; but *Proteſtants* appeal to Scripture as interpreted by the

the whole Church of Chriſt from the Beginning, and particularly by thoſe very Councils which condemned theſe ancient Hereticks.——*Therefore* our Method is the ſame, and we are as heretical as they were, ſince there is only this little *Difference* (which is not *material*) between our Method and theirs.

The primitive Church, and her Paſtors, either in *Councils*, or *without calling Councils*, did condemn the ancient *Hereticks* and *Sectaries*, not for reading the Scriptures, nor yet for appealing to them, but for perverting and miſrepreſenting the Senſe of them. *Therefore Proteſtants* who interpret and apply the Scriptures, juſt as the primitive Church and her Paſtors, either in Councils, or without calling of Councils did, are liable to the ſame Cenſure, and as heretical as the ancient Sectaries were.

The *general Councils* which condemned ancient Hereticks, *repreſented the whole Church, Eaſtern and Weſtern*; but the Council of *Trent* which condemned Proteſtants, *repreſented but a Part* (and that a ſmall Part) *of the Weſtern Church only*; *therefore* it was equally *œcumenical*, and its Authority equally extenſive and great, as that of the four general Councils was.

The primitive Church *anathematized* (perhaps it had been as proper to have ſaid con-

demned) Hereticks *by Scripture.*——But the *Church of* Rome anathematized or condemned Proteſtants *by Tradition.*——*Therefore* there is no *material Difference* in the Rule of Proceeding, or in the Authority of the Decrees.

The *ancient Councils* condemned thoſe for Hereticks *who denied the Divinity of our Saviour*: But the *Synod of Trent* condemns Proteſtants, *who deny the Pope's Supremacy and Infallibility, and that the Church of* Rome *is the Mother and Miſtreſs of all Churches.* Therefore they are as much Hereticks, as theſe ancient Ones were, they are anathematized with equal Juſtice, and there was equal Reaſon and Neceſſity for condemning them.

The *ancient Hereticks* miſunderſtood and perverted the Scriptures.——Therefore we muſt *not read the Scriptures at all*, or at moſt we muſt read them only in *Latin*, which (for the Generality) is to read them without Underſtanding.

The *ancient Hereticks* made *an ill Uſe of their Reaſon, or private Judgment.*——*Therefore* we *muſt make no Uſe of it*; that is to ſay, a Man in the Jaundice ſees Things diſcoloured; *therefore* Men that have not the Jaundice, muſt pull out their Eyes for fear of miſrepreſenting Objects; and becauſe

ſome

ſome have died of Surfeits and Drunkenneſs, *therefore* no Man henceforth muſt eat or drink at all, leſt he run the ſame Hazard.

The *ancient Hereticks*, *Arians* and *Macedonians*, *&c.* who denied the Divinity of Jeſus Chriſt and of the Holy Ghoſt, were condemned by the *whole catholick Church*, which declared the *Faith of the whole Church* and Meaning of the Scriptures, inſerted theſe Declarations into their *Creeds*, and anathematized all who did not approve and receive them.——*Therefore* we *Proteſtants* who receive and hold that Faith whole and entire, without adding to, or taking from it, we who retain and uſe thoſe very Creeds and Profeſſions, in our moſt ſacred Offices, and ſolemn Aſſemblies, and thereby approve the Deeds of the whole Church againſt thoſe Hereticks, we muſt be Hereticks too, and come under the Church's *Anathemas*, as theſe ancient Diſſenters and Sectaries did.——And finally, the *primitive catholick Church*, by her declaring the catholick Faith, and excommunicating Hereticks, exerciſed her *juſt Authority*.——Therefore the *preſent particular Church of* Rome, by her condemning and anathematizing Proteſtants, *proves her Infallibility*. *Q. E. D.*

This is all the *Logick* found in the Gentleman's Reaſoning, and if there is any Connexion

nexion between his Antecedent and Conſequence, or between his Premiſſes and Concluſion, I will leave the Reader to find it out, for I cannot.

And thus the Sum and Reſult of the whole Matter plainly is, That if there be a *material Difference between the real and juſt Authority of the whole catholick Church of Chriſt, to which Proteſtants ſubmit, and a bare Pretence of Infallibility in the particular Church of* Rome, *which they reject, there is neither Truth, nor Strength, nor Connexion, nor common Honeſty, nor common Senſe, in our Author's whole Argument.*

§ IV. Our Author begins his 18th Paragraph in a very lofty Stile, with a Number of big Words, proclaiming a *Triumph before Victory.* " This great Truth of the Infal-
" libility of the Church (ſays he) *being* pro-
" ved, it evidently follows, that the *catho-*
" *lick Church in Communion with the Biſhop*
" *of* Rome, *is the true Church of Chriſt,*
" from which the Proteſtants ſhould never
" have ſeparated, and to which conſequent-
" ly they are obliged to reunite themſelves,
" *&c.*" The proper Anſwer to this is only to read it right, *viz.* " This darling and
" peculiar Doctrine of *Infallibility in the*
" Roman *Church being diſproved,* and her

" bold,

" bold, ſaucy Pretences to it found vain " and groundleſs; *it evidently follows* that " ſhe is *not the true Church of Chriſt*, but " only a Part of his catholick Church, and " that a very diſeaſed, corrupt Part; ſo cor- " rupt, that Proteſtants were obliged in Con- " ſcience and Duty, to ſeparate themſelves " from her dangerous Communion, and " cannot with Safety reunite to it, till ſhe " reforms (as by the Grace of God we have " done) from theſe groſs Errors and Cor- " ruptions ſhe had ſuperinduced into the " Faith, Worſhip, and Polity of the catho- " lick Church."----Which I pray God ſhe may.

As for the Gentleman's *Remark*, " That " Proteſtants preferred no other Commu- " nion, nor joined with any after ſepara- " ting from the *Roman*." It ſhall (at preſent) ſuffice to ask him, " What other Com- " munion than their own did *Romaniſts* join " with, after they made a Sort of Reforma- " tion (ſoon after ours) eſpecially in their " Breviary?

He has indeed a very hardy Affirmation, in the End of this Paragraph, where after having mentioned the *Greek* and other great oriental Communions, he ſays, " In all other " Points, in which the Proteſtants condemn

" our

" our Church, all the Orientals agree in " Faith with us."

Had this Gentleman known, that we underſtand the Reaſons for which the *Eaſtern Churches* ſeparated from the *Roman* Communion, and are not ignorant of the Practices uſed to reunite them, both before and at the Council aſſembled at *Ferrara*, and tranſlated to *Florence* in the Years 1438-9, when ſo much Advantage was taken of thoſe unhappy Straits to which *John Paleologus* (the laſt Chriſtian Emperor of the Eaſt but one) was reduced by the *Mahumetans*, he would have avoided to mention a Subject, which did ſo little Honour to his Church.

However as to this great Agreement he boaſts of between the *Orientals* and *them*, in Matters of Faith; I am content to put the Iſſue of all that is here advanced, on this ſingle Point, *viz.* That if the *Greek* and other great oriental Communions have agreed to acknowledge the Church of *Rome*, to be the Mother and Miſtreſs of all Churches, (which ſhe has made an Article of Faith, without the Belief whereof, ſhe will have none to be ſaved) or if they have but agreed in thoſe two Points, upon which our Author's Paper turns, *viz.* the *Infallibility* and *Supremacy* of the *Roman* Church, then I ſhall be his Proſelyte; but if they have not,

he

he ſhould be mine, or at leaſt ſhould acknowledge that he has ſpoke without Book, and affirmed without Evidence.

His 19th Paragraph is filled with his many *Marks* or *Properties of the true Church*, ſome of which I have noticed before, and ſhall not reconſider them now, ſince if they were all applicable to the Church of *Rome*, and to no other Church upon Earth, (which is not the Caſe) they would only prove her to be a *true* or *real Church*, but not to be *infallible*.

It would be equally tedious and unneceſſary, to examine what this learned Author has ſaid (towards the End of his Paper) of the *Pope's Supremacy*, as it does not come within the Bounds of my Undertaking in this Treatiſe: Beſides he has eſtabliſhed it upon the firm Foundation of the *Infallibility* of his Church, which he ſays he has *already proved*; but if he has not already proved it, (as I humbly think it is by this Time evident that he has not) the other falls of Courſe, as being ſet upon a ſandy Bottom. And as for the other Authorities he has brought to prop it, the moſt learned and accurate Dr. *Iſaac Barrow* has ſet them all in a clear Light, and quite exhauſted that Subject. His Treatiſe of the Supremacy is ſo full, and ſtrong, and deciſive againſt them, that (though they have had almoſt fourſcore

Years to think of it) they have never yet been able to anſwer it, and probably never will.

Upon the whole, when the Reader has ſummed up, and united the Strength of what is (not with Art and Flouriſh, but with Plainneſs and Perſpicuity) laid before him in the ſeveral Sections of this Treatiſe, I hope he will (by the Bleſſing of Heaven) find the Satisfaction deſired; and his Mind will be more confirmed in the Belief and Profeſſion of the Truth, by being thus guarded againſt thoſe "Sleights of Men, "thoſe cunning Craftineſſes whereby *Ro-* "*man Miſſionaries* ly in wait to deceive."

I pray God this may be the happy Effect of my poor Labour, and that they for whoſe Service it is intended,——"being "ſtedfaſt in Faith, and ſincere in Love, "may grow up unto him in all Things, "which is the *Head*, *even Chriſt*, from "whom the whole Body fitly joined toge- "ther, and compacted by that which every "Joint ſupplieth, according to the effectual "working in the Meaſure of every Part, "maketh Increaſe of the Body, unto the "edifying of its ſelf in Love[g]."

When the impartial attentive Reader reflects,

[g] Eph. iv. 14. *&c.*

flects, *that* the *Roman* Catholick Divines are not agreed among themſelves, what Sort of *Infallibility* it is that they contend for, —— nor how they come by it,——nor where it is lodged,——nor to what Purpoſe it would ſerve, if they had found it.

That the *holy Scriptures* are ſo ſilent in this Matter, and are far from aſcertaining this Privilege to the *Roman* Church, after all the Pains taken to rack and ſtrain them, that they might ſeem to ſpeak it out.

That the *venerable Fathers* of the Church, in her firſt and pureſt Ages (taken either jointly or ſeparately) knew nothing of *Roman* Infallibility, nor ever appealed or ſubmitted to that Church or her Biſhop, on account of their unerring Direction, and abſolute Immunity from Error; but in ſeveral Inſtances rejected the Decrees, and deſpiſed the Cenſures of the *Roman* Pontiffs.

When he reflects that our *Reaſon* or *Faculty of judging*, is the Gift of God, and given that it may be uſed with Diſcretion, Humility, Thankfulneſs, and a conſtant Regard to the Honour of the bountiful Beſtower of it.

When he reflects that there is no Compariſon, no Likeneſs between the *ancient general Councils* and the *little packed Aſſembly at* Trent, either in Point of Numbers

and Repreſentation, or of Freedom and Uncorruptedneſs, or of the Rule by which they proceeded, and the Ends they had in View.

In ſhort, when he reflects coolly and ſeriouſly on the great Difference there is between the *real Authority of the whole catholick Church, and the alledged Infallibility of but one Part of that whole.*——That the univerſal Church of Chriſt in all Ages and Places, and the particular Church of *Rome* (I mean all the Churches in the *Roman* Communion) are very different Things; and *that* the *Promiſes* made to the *whole* are not to be confined and limited to *any one Part*, nor the *Privileges* granted to the *Body*, made the peculiar Property of any one *Member*[h], *&c.*

When the intelligent Reader (I ſay) has recollected all this, he will ſee through the Thinneſs of the Reaſonings of theſe two learned Gentlemen, whoſe Arguments I have been examining; and be fully convinced, that the Infallibility of their Church (which they would ſo fain perſuade us to believe) is an Impoſition upon the common Reaſon and Underſtanding of Mankind, a vain Boaſt, a bare Pretence, without Foundation or Support, either in Scripture or Antiquity.

[h] 1 Cor. xii. 12—21.

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FINIS.